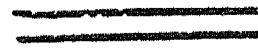
SREE

SRIVACHANA BHUSHANAM

By

Sri Pillai Lokacharya



An English Glossary

By

Sri Satyamurthi Swami, Gwalior

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PREFACE

by

Nyaya Vedanta Vidwan T. A. Sampathkumaracharya, M. A.

A HIDDEN TREASURE EXPOSED

It is a well-known fact that in all teachings, secular, religious or philosophical, the highest truths are not taught to all, but to a select few, who are deemed by the preceptor to have matured and fit enough to receive and digest them. These highest truths are looked upon as a treasure, which has te be guarded against immature and malicious persons, who are out to spoil them. The Vedas, whose very purpose is to bring the highest truths to light—the word Veda means Knowledge (or the Source of knowledge)—do not reveal those truths easily, but have preferred to keep them aloof, for a limited or select few. A part of the Vedas, and a tiny part at that, is called the Upanishad, because it is whispered into the ears of a disciple, sitting very close, In these Upanishads, we often hear of the teacher testing the pupil's earnestness or thirst for acquiring the secret knowledge. There are also injunctions forbidding the teacher from revealing the secret teachings to an undeserving person: Did not the great Gitacharya, who thought it fit to divulge so many philosophie truths to Arjuna, under the pretext of solving his political, or at best moral difficulty, caution him at the end of the discourse. not to divulge those secrets to an undeserving person, i. e , to one who does no penance, has no love for God and the teacher, and is jealous ? He who is not adept but handles a sensitive machine harms himself and spoils the machine as well. Similarly, an undeserving person, gaining aceess to a great truth harms himself by using it the wrong way and spoils the truth itself by misinterpretation and misrepresentation.

No wonder then, that the great Sri Vaishnava Acharyas like Sri Nathamuni and Sri Yamunacharya, followed in the footsteps of the Upanishadie teachers and preserved the secret teachings, by taking care to impart them only to a select few, who had reached the moral and mental maturity, the necessary qualifications for the higher initiation. But Sri

Ramanujacharya felt that his predecessors were too hard upon the disciples, by putting them to very rigorous tests. So, he broke the tradition by dispensing with all these tests and imparting the teachings to all those that merely asked for them. He felt that, otherwise, nobody might come forward to learn these teachings, as a result of which, they would disappear altogether, in the long run.

But even this great, magnanimous teacher (Sri Ramanuja) dared not commit to writing what all he preached orally. He thought that unlike teaching, a written book is liable to fall into the hands of undesirable elements and get spoiled. He has, no doubt, hinted at most of these truths in his great Sri Bhashya, Gita Bhashya and the three Gadyas. But the beauty of it is that they are so cleverly introduced and so carefully worded that the average reader cannot fathom their depth.

After Sri Ramanuja, these teachings gained circulation among increasingly wider sections of the people, preparing the ground for their eventual codification. It was at this stage, i.e., about two centuries after Sri Ramanuja, that another great teacher, called Sri Pillai Lokacarya, thought it fit and necessary to put those teachings in black and white, as, otherwise, they might be lost in course of time or undergo undesirable changes. Thus, the credit of being the first teacher to write Rahasya texts, i.e. books dealing with the meanings of the three esoteric mantras and allied secret teachings of the great teachers before him, goes to Sri Pillai Lokacharya.

Of the eighteen works, known as 'Ashtadasa Rahasyas' of Sri Pillai Lokacharya, 'Sri Vachana Bhushana' is easily the grandest. Its name implies that it is intended to be an ornament (to be worn by the aspirant to salvation) made up of the gem-like sayings of our great teachers of yore. Sri Manavalamamuni, another great teacher, has written an extensive and beautiful commentary on this great work. These two works, the original and the commentary, contain the highest teachings pertaining to Sri Vaishnavism, as preached and practised by the long line of teachers.

Our forefathers used to teach these works to a selected few only, who were formally admitted to the fold of Sri Vaishnavism and desisted from giving public lectures on them. Thus, they regardcd and guarded it as a great treasure, which has to be preserved with the utmost care. But under the modern environment, people have neither the opportunity nor leisure to sit down, at the feet of the Master, and learn these texts in the traditional way. They are not also able to read and follow the original, whose wordings and scholarly diction cannot be ordinarily understood by them. To help such people, who really have the desire to have a dip into

this vast ocean of nectar, but are deprived the opportunity to do so, the famous modern scholar and teacher, Sri Jagadacharya P. B. Annangaracharya Swami has brought out easy annotations and paraphrases in many languages.

Sri Satyamurthi Ayyangar is well-versed in the Rahasya lore and has rendered many of them into beautiful English. His present attempt to give a readable, concise version of the 'Sri Vachana Bhushanam' is really commendable. Generally speaking, translations lose the flavour and vigour of the original. The style of Sri Vachana Bhushana and its commentary are, moreover, inimitable Nevertheless, the present author has succeeded in presenting the original in a clear and concise form, bringing out all the essential points and giving up all digressions. In fact, he has done full justice to the subject and it is well nigh impossible to improve upon his thesis.

I am sure that any persan having a little background of Sri Vaishnava Religion and Philosophy, will greatly benefit by a deep study of this work. He may, perhaps, feel some difficulty in following certain topics, discussed herein, but that is inevitable, because they are unfamiliar, strange ones. So, the reader will have to approach a proper teacher, to guide him further on.

A word of caution ! As already stated, the truths explained in the Sri Vachana Bhushana are not meant for the use of the man-in-the street, who knows and cares for nothing beyond the worldly comforts and luxuries, but for a highly developed God-thirsty soul. As the saying goes, one man's food is another's poison. So, it is harmful for less-developed souls to apply some of the doctrines, taught in this great work, indiscriminately. Again, if someone feels that some of these teachings cannot be appreciated or practised, let him understand that he has not reached the necessary state of moral development.

At the end, I reiterate my pleasure in recommending this book to the pursuit and study of all people, who yearn to know something about the higher truths, lying beyond the worldly things.

Kancheepuram
6-11-72

T. A. Sampathkumaracharya.

INTRODUCTION

Our illustrious Preceptors (Poorvacharayas), well-versed in all Shastras, preached, in an easily assimilable form, the inner meanings of the elaborate Vedic texts, bringing them within easy reach of even those with meagre intellect. And some of the later Teachers supplemented their efforts by writing lucid commentaries for the benefit of the yearning votaries. Of these, the secret doctrines (Rahasya Granthas) occupy the pride of place. It has been enjoined that every Srivaishnava shall recite daily, the texts of at least threee of the eighteen esoteric works brought out by Sri Pillailokacharya, namely, 'Srivachanabhushanam', 'Tattvatrayam' and 'Mumukshuppdi' and the fourth, namely, 'Acharyahridayam', compiled by his equally eminent younger brother, as an integral part of a disciplined scheme of daily recitation-Nityanusandhan, on a par with the schematic diurnal recitation of the core of 'Divya Prabandham. The special importance of these texts can be perceived from the fact that Sri Manavala Mahamuni (the last of that pre-eminent galaxy of prceeptors), the glorious glossator, wrote illuminating commentaries on each one of them. Both the text and the commentaries have to be necessarily studied in the pristine style, at the feet of great Masters, for a correct and proper appreciation of the gems of knowledge embedded therein. This would by-no-means be possible for a good many in the modern world of stress and strain. It is for the effortless grasp of these very people that Jagadacharya Simhasanadipathi P. B. Annangaracharya Swami has, with his wonted magnanimity, written brief, yet brilliant commentaries for all these texts. Two of these, namely, 'Mumukshuppadi' and 'Tattvatrya' have already been rendered in English by me. An attempt has now been made by me to present the English version of 'Srivachanabhushanam' also, a much more voluminous work than the other two.

(ii) Here is a unique jewel of rare excellence, set in choice diction—the rare gems of spiritual thoughts delivered, in camera, by the great Masters to their intimate and trustworthy disciples and tended by the latter, as closely

guarded secrets, in keeping with their inherent importance—a jewel shedding special lustre on those wearing it, that is, reciting the texts like unto a Jewel studded with gems and rubies prepared by the deft hand of a master jeweller. This is precisely how the work in question has been described by Sri Manavala Mamuni who has extolled the intrinsic merit and greatness of this work, in as many as seven stanzas in a row (53 to 59), in his 'Upadesa Ratnamaala'.

(iii) This compilation has been broadly divided into four cantos (Prakaranas) and yet, it can be regarded as comprising six distinct topics (aspects), as brought out in the following sloka;—

पुरुषकारवैभवम् साधनस्य गौरवं
तदद्दिकारिकृत्यं अस्यसत्गुरूपसेवनं
हरिदयामहेतुकीं गुरोरुपायताश्चयो
वचन भूषणेवदज् जगत्गुरुं तमाश्श्रये

(1) पुरुषकार वैभवं (Purushakara vaibhavam) (aphorisms 5-22)-the greatness of Sri Mahalakshmi, the Divine Mother, the unfailing mediatrix, the great intercessor between the Supreme Lord, on the one hand, and thc teeming millions of His Subjects, steeped in countless trangressions of all sorts, on the other;

(2) साधनस्यगौरवं (Sadhanasya Gowravam) aphorisms 23-70-The overwhelming merit of 'Prapatti' or the path of loving surrender to the Lord's voluntary or spontaneous grace vis-a-vis the other paths of discipline;

(3) तदद्दिकारिकृत्यं (Tadadikari Krityam)-aphorisms 80-307 – The code of conduct set for the 'Prapanna'-the one who has taken sole refuge in the Lord's redemptive grace;

(4) अस्यसत्गुरुपसेवनं (asya satguroopa sevanam)-aphorisms 308-365—The manner in which this Subject should seek and serve a preceptor of eminence.

(5) हरिदयामहेतुकीं (Haridayam ahetukeem) aphorisms 366-406-the redemptive grace of Hari, the Supreme Lord, flowing with sweet spontaniety; and

(6) गुरोरुपायतां (Gurorupayatam) aphorisms 407-463-The part played by the Preceptor in enabling the Subject to ford the vast expanse of Samsara, the earthly bondage.

(iv) There is yet another grouping of the topics under nine headings, as shown below:—

(1) The grandeur of Sri Mahalakshmi's unsolicited Grace-the Divine Mother, as the unfailing mediatrix, the great intercessor between the supreme Lord and His subjects; (aphorisms 5-22) ;

(2) the efficacy of surrender unto the Supreme Lord (Thirumaal) as the sole means of attaining Him; (aphorisms 23-114);

(3) the relative inferiority of the other paths of discipline; (aphorisms 115-141);

(4) the prowess of those who pursue the true Path by pinning their faith solely on Him; (aphorisms 141-242);

(5) the code of conduct followed by the Subject in the above category, with a clear comprehension of the quintessence of the Vedic teachings; (aphorisms 243-307);

(6) the traits of the glorious preceptor who leads us on to the comely feet of Sriman Narayana, the Supreme Lord (aphorisms 308-320);

(7) the conduct of the true disciples towards their immaculate preceptor, the repository of divine effulgence; (aphorisms 321-365);

(8) the voluntary grace shed by the Supreme Lord on His Subjects (totally unrelated to their merit) in salving them; (aphorisms 366-406), and

(9) the finale-the state of salvation—the eternal bliss and beatitude and the paramount need for reverence to the preceptor, even at that stage, as the unfailing medium for its attainment-the 'Charama parva nishta', as distinguished from 'Pratama parva nishta' or direct worship of the Lord; (aphorisms 407-463).

(v) The importance of 'Upadesa Granthas' like 'Srivachana bhushanam' in the scheme of Shastraic learning can hardly be minimised or under-rated. If ever we attempted to study the Shastras by ourselves, dispensing with these 'Upadesa Granthas', it would be like seeking to quench our thirst by drinking the salt water from the sea. On the other hand, the 'Upadesa Granthas' like 'Mumukshuppadi', 'Tattvatrayam', 'Srivachana bhushanam' and 'Acharya hridayam', present in a clear and concise form, the cream and essence of knowledge spread over a vast and wide range of Shastras, like unto the sweet rain drops unleashed by the benevolent clouds condensing the brine from the sea. So then, we are immensely beholden to those intellectual stalwarts like Pillailokachariar, his younger brother, Alagiya Manavalapperumal Nayanar, Manavala Mahamuni etc., who, out of boundless compassion for us all, have brought out and bequeathad to us these texts and commentaries. It seems appro-

priate to conclude this preface by emphasising the need for a proper sense of direction and guidance while embarking on a study of the Shastras and the resultant necessity of seeking the help of our immediate spiritual preceptors, well-versed in the traditional learning of the Shastras. The time spent in their company will indeed be most rewarding.

S. SATYAMURTHI

CANTO 1

(First Prakarana)

Aphorisms 1-4 : *'Vedo upabrahmana'—the Itihasas and Puranas.*

Unlike the 'Vedabahya' (i. e.) aliens like Charvakas, Jains, Buddhists etc., who do not admit the authority of the Vedas, there are other religionists, who have unflinching faith in the Vedas, as the Supreme Authority (Pramana), overriding the other types of pramana, namely, the *ocular* (verifiable by the naked eye) and the *'Anumana'* or the inferential. Those, who admit the sole authority of the Vedas, have to resolve their doubts in regard to the precise meanings of the Vedic texts, with the help of the 'Smritis' (Dharma Shastras like those compiled by Sages Manu, Atri, Yagnavalkya etc.), the 'Itihasas' (classics like Ramayana and Mahabharata) and the *'Puranas'* (elaborate historic delineations like Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, Vishnu Purana etc).

The Vedas comprise (1) the 'Karma Kanda', otherwise known as 'Poorva Kanda' dealing with rites and rituals, the ritualistic worship of the Lord, and (2) the 'Brahma Kanda', also known as 'Uttara Kanda' or 'Vedanta' or 'Upanishads', expatiating on the great glory of the Lord, His attributes etc. While the 'Smritis', referred to above, aid the proper appreciation of the Karma Kanda, the 'Itihasas' and the 'Puranas' come in handy for the elucidation of the moot points in Brahma Kanda. As between 'Itihasas' and 'Puranas' the former has a superior hold in this respect.

Aphorisms 5-22 : *Purushakara'—the instrumentality of Goddess Mahalakshmi in her recommendatory role.*

An epic of top-ranking excellence that Ramayana is, it is said to describe the greatness of Sita, the Captive. As a matter of fact, according to the Author's own admission, the Kavya, in its entirety, deals with the story of Sita (Kavyam Ramayanam Kritsnam Seethayascharitam mahat-Valmiki Ramayana, Balakanda, Sarga 4—Sloka 7). The glory or greatness of Sita's Captivity lies in the spontaniety with which she courted imprisonment in Lanka and underwent unspeakable sufferings in order to secure

the release of the numerous celestial beauties kept in bondage by the formidable Ravana—an act of Grace Galore ! The superficial reader who sees not the element of Grace but only a Sita, forcibly abducted by the love-smitten Ravana, completely missess the mark—he or she sadly overlooks the great prowess of the Divine Mother who could, by merely pronouncing शीतोभव हनुमतः (Seethobhava Hanumatah) still the fire on the tail of Hanuman. Had she but spelt out the words 'नष्टोभव' (Nashto bhava), it would have meant the instantaneous extinction of Ravana, the abrupt end of his headlong hegemony. And then, Mahabharata, the other great epic, is said to pronounce the greatness of the errand boy—the Supreme Lord, come down to Earth as Sri Krishna, doing the meanest of jobs, as a 'Go—between', the messenger of 'Pandavas'—simplicity galore ! the very acme of simplicity, which just melts down the hearts of the devotees into running rivulets. It is thus gathered that the two great epics recount respectively, the *glory of the Divine Mother*, who effectively intercedes on behalf of the vast concourse of humanity, whose endless transgressions would otherwise completely alienate them from the Omniscient Lord and the *glorious patronage of the Lord*, the condescending love and meticulous care bestowed by Him on the Subjects admitted to His fold, as a result of the aforesaid mediation.

The three essential traits which ensure fruitful mediation by the Divine Mother are :—*Compassion* for the suffering masses, the basic factor or the motive force inducing the Mother to jump into the fray and plead with the Lord for their salvation; *Subservience* to the Lord so as to be able to compel His attention to her pleadings and *exclusive dependence* on the Lord, inculcating in Him a personal sense of belonging and identity of interests with her. These three traits were displayed, one by one, in the above order, during Sri Mahalakshmi's incarnation as Sita, the foster daughter of King Janaka, when she got separated from Rama thrice. The first separation from Rama resulting in her internment for ten months in Ravana's Lanka, the so-called abduction by Ravana, brought to the fore her boundless, rather unique compassion, not only for the women already kept in bondage by Ravana but aiso for the seven hundred and odd Rakshasis who teased, termented and tortured her, all the time, by vouchsafing unto them, *unasked* and *unsolicited*, protection from the terrific wrath of Hanuman, who could have made short work of them, in no time.

The separation forced on Sita on the next occasion, ostensibly to overcome public criticism of Rama's conduct in taking her back despite her long stay in an alien land, was, in fact, designed to demonstrate her utter *subservience* to Rama. No doubt, life away from Rama was not worth living at all and she would have liked to put an end to her miserable exis-

tence by throwing herself into the swirling waters of the river Ganga. But then, with Rama's progeny inside her womb right then, she would not take that step, out of consideration for Rama. Even after the child birth, she did not feel like committing suicide lest it should bring Rama into disrepute and keep his children under a cloud. Here then was a total suppression of her own feelings even under the most tragic circumstances, to uphold Rama's honour.

As regards the third and final separation, so far as that particular Avatar was concerned, it came off, right in the presence of Rama, after the restoration of his two sons. In Uttara Ramayana, it has been stated that. with joined palms and bowing head, Sita beckoned Mother Earth to come and take her inside her bosom by way of vindicating her (Sita's) *impeccable purity of mind where there was no place for any one except Rama.* And lo ! a divine chariot came from beneath the earth and in it, Sita was seated by Mother Earth. As the chariot carrying Sita disappeared right into the earth, flowers were strewn by the celestials in adoration of Sita. Thus her exclusive dependence on Rama, her Lord, was demonstrated.

Sufferings have relevance and meaning only in the case of mortals on whom they are visited as punishments for past deeds. In the case of the Divine Mother, whe transcended the domain of Karma, the separations, as above, can only serve the purpose of bringing out these three traits in her, namely, compassion, snbservience to the Lord and exclusive dependence on Him. Possessing these traits, the Gracious Mother plays the role of mediatrix, both when she is in the company of the Lord (Samslesha) and away from Him (vislesha). An illustration of the former is the manner in which she pleaded with Rama and saved the life of Kakasura (Indra's son, Jayanta, in the guise of a crow). The Mother's role, when she was away from Rama could be appreciated from her persuasion of Hanuman to desist from wreaking vengeance on the Rakshasis whe had given her a hell of time.

Intercession naturally implies a dual role for Sri Mahalakshmi, the eternal spouse of the Supreme Lord. When in the Lord's immediate presence, she veers Him round to her way of thinking, in regard to the redemption of the frail mankind. When away from Him, she weans the Subjects from the earth-burying sensual pleasures and makes them conscious seekers of the Lord's bounty-His redemptive Grace. On both fronts, she gains her objective through coaxing eloquence and wholesome advice. With her remarkable grace and solicitude, she exhorts the Subjects to shed all fear of punishment for their misdeeds of commission and omission, at the hands of a strict and unrelenting judge, the Supreme Lord, and seek refuge in His lotus feet, their salvation lying there and there alone. Having thus

brought the supplicants to the Lord's door-step, the Mother has indeed won the first round of the battle for their salvation. But then, the truck-loads of vices and foibles of the petitioners, on whose behalf she is interceding can hardly ever escape the unerring scrutiny of the omniscient Lord. And so, the supreme offenders will have the door shut against them by the Supreme Judge but for the Mother's effective intercession and wholesome compromise between twe seemingly irreconcilable facets, namely, the Lord's dependence on the Shastras and His juridical responsibility to secure the ends of Shastraic Justice in the light of the 'Karma' or deeds of the individual souls, *on the one hand*, and the petitioners' own bonds of 'Karma' which keep them inextricably bound down to a long travail of suffering through innumerable births, *on the other*.

It is through the Mother's sound advocacy that the bonds are demolished on both sides. This is how she carries the day. Pleading with the Lord, she says : "My Lord ! if you really mean to exercise your qualities of *Mercy*, *Love* and *Kindness*, you have now a glorious opportunity which you can not afford to skip off except at the risk of perpetuating the enormous distance between You and Your Subjects. As regards Your sense of involvement in shastraic standards of justice, retribution and things of that sort, You can jolly well invoke these norms in respect of the myriads of Your subjects who are still straying far, far away from You. Surely, you should draw the line in the case of those who seek Your hand of protection by falling at Your lotus feet, like unto the Contrite petitioners now at Your very door-step and acknowledge them with open hands, in vindication of Your special trait of 'Vatsalya' (tender solicitude) which enables You to see good in evil and thereby love even the evil-doors. You will thus achieve the golden mean." Indeed, quite a convincing argument *cum* advice which carries conviction with the Lord, Who deigns to admit unto His sweet fold the petitioners ushered in by the Gracious Mother and that means their emancipation from the dreadful cycle of birth and death-Divine justice tempered with merey.

In the case of those incurable Subjects, who are not amenable to the Mother's advice, she does not give them up as 'incorrigibles' but retrieves them by shedding her special grace on them and bringing about a radical change in their outlook. If, on the other hand, the Supreme Lord, in the exercise of unbridled independence (Swatantrya), turns a deaf ear to the Mother's entreaty, the beloved spouse of the Lord that she is, she unleashes her irresistible physical charms and casts a bewitching spell on Him; enthralled by her ravishing beauty, He then carries out her dictates, in full.

Even as Ramayana highlights the glory of the Divine Mother as the great Mediatrix, Mahabharata brings out the glory of the Lord as the

Supreme Benefactor, the unfailing Means for our salvation, as shown below :—

In the ordinary sequence of events, the preceptor comes in the picture first, by way of imparting spiritual knowledge, heretofore unknown to the disciple; next comes the recommendatory role of the Divine Mother through whose grace, the disciple is ushered at the door-step of the Lord. and then comes the finale, namely, salvation granted by the Lord. It is, however, seen that, in the case of Arjuna, Lord Krishna took upon Himself, all the three roles. As preceptor, He imparted, through the Gita, a volume of spiritual knowledge, unknown to Arjuna before; He also dispelled Arjuna's fear of punishment for all the transgressions committed by him and thus played the role of Sri Mahalakshmi, and finally, placed Himself as the sole Refuge for Arjuna's salvation-'Mamekam Saranam vraja, aham tva sarvapapebhyo mokshayishyami ma suchah' and asked Arjuna to take refuge in Him and Him alone, looking upon Him as the sole Means for his deliverance.

The greatness of (1) the good offices (ie) the recommendatory role of Sri Mahalakshmi and (2) the Lord, as the Means for our salvation, stems not merely from their not shunning the Subjects because of the latter's two-fold transgressions of commission of the forbidden acts and omission of the enjoined acts but from the positive stand taken in bringing the Subjects within their purview despite their heavy drawbacks, by invoking that remarkable trait, known as 'Vatsalya'. On the other hand, if the Divine Couple had given up their respective roles, in view of the two-fold transgressions, pointed out above, it would just operate as a boomerang on them. The conscious seeker of the Lord's redemptive grace can not be given up, in view of the inalienable bonds subsisting between him and the Divine Couple, who stand in the relation of Father and Mother, compelling them to arrogate to themselves complete identity of interests with the seeker at the door. Failure to commiserate with the sad plight of the Subjects and overlook their faults, rather, accept them with all their faults, by invoking the special traits of Love and Mercy, will, therefore, constitute a two-fold transgression on the part of the Divine Couple themselves. And again, if those who have been eventually admitted to the Lord's sweet fold think that their salvation has been accomplished only because their erstwhile transgressions had been wiped off, they become guilty of further transgressions which are also two-fold. Thinking, as above, is tantamount to 'akritya karana' or commission of a thing prohibited and failure to remember their own shortcomings and gratefully acknowledge the magnanimity of the Divine Couple, in accepting them with all their faults, constitutes a serious omission (Kritya akarana).

It might be asked whether there are specific instances to show that the Divine Couple performed their respective roles of mediation and protection, holding that the transgressions of the Subjects salved were, in themselves, good enough to warrant their uplift. Yes, there are. The cruel monstrocities perpetrated by the Rakshasis of Lanka on Sita, during her captivity, extending over ten long months, are too well-known. And yet, did she not plead with Hanuman, on their behalf, even justifying their atrocious conduct, as a matter of mere compliance with the orders of Ravana, their King (Kurvanteenam Paragnaya) and holding that the Rakshasis who, according to Hanuman, were sinners (papanam), were, according to her, meritorious (subhanam) and finally asserting that there is none above mistakes (na kaschin na aparadhyathi) ? If the Mother saw good in evil (Dhosha), there is no need to make special mention of her attitude towards the lack of goodness, as such (guna hani). And now, turning to the Lord, who is the Means for our salvation, the many-sided patronage extended by Lord Krishna to Arjuna despite his heavy drawbacks (dosha), is the pointer. The drawbacks of Arjuna are not so well-known as the atrocious conduct of the aforesaid Rakshasis. As a matter of fact, Arjuna had the reputation of being the foremost among those who have acquired self-control or control over the Indriya (sense organs). His puritanic behaviour in resisting the overtures of no less than Urvasi, the celestial damsel, famed for her ravishing beauty, on the ground that she was a virtual mother unto him, was indeed extraordinary. And then, apart from his being a staunch believer in the Shastras and their mandates, he was the bosom friend and intimate companion of Sri Krishna Himself. And so, what were his sins, referred to here ? These are enumerated below :- Having come up to the battlefield, right into the midst of the armies arrayed on both sides. it was indeed terribly sinful on his part to shrink from fight at the zero hour, prompted by ill-conceived considerations of compassion, love and kinship. But this pales into insignificance, in the face of the far more serious transgression committed by him and his four brothers. When Draupadhi was being disrobed by the dastardly Duschasan, she found her stalwart husbands standing motionless in that assembly and, therefore, cried out, seeking refuge at the feet of Sri Krishna. The continued inaction on the part of the Pandavas, even after Draupadhi's surrender at the feet of Sri Krishna, was indeed unpardonable, the more so, in the case of Arjuna. He had such close ties with Sri Krishna that he (Arjuna) was bound to rescue Draupadhi, there and then, as one who had sought refuge in Sri Krishna. though not, as his wife. It was really a matter of hideous shame that he stood still, even at that stage, without any qualms or compunction. In Sri Krishna's view, this was a serious blot and the Pandavas deserved

to be chopped off along with the Kauravas. And yet, He allowed the Pandavas to survive, only for the sake of the devout Draupadhi, in order to keep the 'mangala sutra', the marital chord round her neck, in tact. She had taken a vow to tie up her lock again, only by annointing it with Duryodhana's blood after he was slain. It was only to enable her to fulfil this vow that Sri Krishna ran an errand to Duryodhana, undertook to be Arjuna's charioteer, exhorted a recalcitrant Arjuna to fight, placing before him, in this context, the very quintessence of the Shastras, namely, '*Prapatti*' or loving surrender unto the Lord, and directed the military strategy, at every turn, till victory was won.

Aphorisms 23-27 *Prapatti* (प्रपत्ति) *Surrender to the Lord's redemptive Grace-Co-opertaion of Man's free will and God's free grace.*

It seems rather odd that the 'Prapatti' (प्रपत्ति) Shastra should have been taught by Lord Krishna to Arjuna, right on the battlefield without choosing an appropriate place and time and without Arjuna going through a sacramental bath, preparatory to such an important 'Upadesa'. Well, there are no restrictions regarding time and place, ceremonial procedures, eligibility etc., and the only thing that matters is where exactly 'Prapatti' should be performed, that is, the person unto whom one should surrender for the fulfilment of one's cherished desire or objective. The selection of a sacred or sanctified spot, a particular season like spring, exclusion of persons not belonging to the first three 'Varnas' (i. e.) 'Sudras', ritualistic procedures etc. are relevant only in regard to the performance of rites and rituals like jyotishtoma etc. By way of illustration, the case of Vibhishana can be pointed out. It was when matters had come to a head and at the very brink of war on Lanka that Vibhishana crossed the ocean and sought refuge in Sri Rama's Camp. When the point of time at which Vibhishana sought asylum and the place at which it was done, were debated upon, the knowledgeable Hanuman averred, "Sa yesha dhesah kalascha bhavatheeha yatha thatha" - that is to say, his (Vibhishana's) very coming over to Rama's Camp should be deemed to mark the appropriate time and place in view of the purity of his intentions, which alone should form the main point for consideration. This principle is clearly reflected in the 'Mantra Ratna' or 'Dvayam', which runs as follows: 'Sreeman Narayana Charanau Saranam Prapadye; Sreemate Narayanaya Namah'. The suffix 'matup' in the word 'Sreemat' indicates the eternal nature of the conjunction of the Lord and Mahalakshmi. The perpetual presence of the latter, by the side of her Lord, is intended to prepare the ground for supplication by individual souls, at all times, without any restriction whatsoever, and all that is needed is the desire on their part to submit to the Lord's protection. This desire might dawn on them at a par-

ticular moment and then vanish altogether. If, at that particular moment of longing, Sri Mahalakshmi was away from the Lord, the supplication would not yield the desired result and hence the paramount need for the eternal conjunction, referred to above. The indispensability of Mahalakshmi's presence by the side of the Lord, at the time of supplication by individual souls, has already been dealt with, at some length. Although the Lord is the ultimate Giver and Deliverer, yet, He will act only when Mahalakshmi plays the recommendatory role, mediating and pleading for the erring souls.

Aphorisms 28-31 : That there is no procedural wrangling in regard to 'Prapatti' could be gathered from several episodes, a few of which are cited below : What was the state in which Draupadhi performed 'Saranagati' (Prapatti) ? She was in her monthly course when Duschasan dragged her forcibly from her resting place and disrobed her. And then, was not the Prapatti Shastra itself taught by Lord Krishna to Arjuna within the hearing of the impious men ranged opposite ? There are, therefore, no inhibitions regarding the time, place and environment for the performance of Saranagati or for discoursing on it. There is also no special imposition or pre-condition such as purificatory bath etc. One could resort to 'Prapatti' straightaway, "*As is where is.*" When it was pointed out to the great Acharya, Nampillai, by one of his disciples, named Velvettippillai, that Sri Rama offered 'Saranagati' to the King of the oceans, facing east and observing other ritualistic formalities, the learned Preceptor elucidated that it was done so by Shri Rama, as a matter of course, in keeping with his orthodox background and not as something mandatory. As a matter of fact, Sri Rama resorted to the said 'Saranagati' only on the advice of Vibhishana, who, however, didn't have a single dip in the ocean before he sought asylum at the feet of Sri Rama. The lesson to be learnt from this contrasting picture is that 'Saranagati' could be performed in any manner, with or without a bath, the one, who hasn't had his bath already, not being under any compulsion to take a bath and conversely, the one, who has had his bath already, need not defile himself by way of emulating the former.

Aphorisms 32-38 : None is excluded from the scope of 'Saranagati', on grounds of ineligibility, as could be seen from a fair cross-section of those, who had recourse to it—the Pandavas and Draupadhi, Kakasura (the crow) and Kaliyan (the serpent). Gajendra (the elephant), Vibhishana (the Rakshasa), Lakshmana (Sri Rama's brother) and Sri Rama Himself. And to show that there is no fixed result, look at the diversity of the results achieved, with reference to the end each had in view, namely, *Kingdom*, for the Pandavas, Copious *supply of clothing*, for Draupadhi, *their very survival*,

for Kakasura and Kaliyan, *the Service prayed for* by Gajendra, *admission into Rama's Camp*, for Vibhishana, *constant attendance on Sri Rama*, for Lakshmana, and *crossing the ocean*, for Sri Rama.

Although considerations of time, locale etc. which usually enter the performance of other tasks have been completely ruled out, as elucidated above, yet, what matters is from whom you seek salvation through such surrender. Evidently you have to lean on the Supreme One and not the lesser deities. Even in respect of the Supreme One, it is His Iconic representation (Arccha or Image) which is not only most easily accessible but is also the very embodiment of every known and conceivable good quality, in a perfect measure, a complete enumeration whereof would be beyond the capacity of the omni-Scient Lord Himself, if ever He attempted it. Therefore it was, that the Azhvars, known for their profound Divine wisdom, imparted to them by the Supreme Lord Himself, did 'Prapatti', that is. took refuge only in 'Arccha', *the image form of the Lord*, a veritable ocean of innumerable excellences, in preference to the Lord's other manifestations, namely, 'Para', 'Vyuha', Vibhava', and 'Antaryami' Swaroopa. By perfection, (Poornam) in the Iconic manifestation, is meant the converging in it, in a complete measure, of a vast treasure of all auspicious qualities. This is brought out by the Vedic text "Poornasya poornamadaya poornameva avasishyate, Sarvam poornam Sahome". No doubt, the qualities of sowlabhya (easy accessibility), Sowseelya (graciousness) and Vatsalya (tender solicitude) are also displayed by the Lord in His 'Para' or transcendental manifestation, presiding in the High Heavens-"Vasudevosi Poornaha". But, in that land of perfect bliss and perpetual splendour, these qualities can hardly be perceptible in such a marked degree, as they are in this land of darkness, delusion and despair. There is all the difference between the two spheres as between a light burning in broad day light and the one shining forth in a dark room. This is worth grasping by the sceptics and half-hearted believers among us, who haven't got implict faith in the 'Agamas' relating to Idol-consecration and Idol- worship and look upon Idols as a beginner's task, as mere aids to concentration in the early stages. In the Image form, the Supreme Lord not only pervades it but makes it His special abode, transposing His true nature as Master of all, absolutely independent and above all wants. Here, He is the very acme of simplicity, hanging on willy-nilly to the frail mankind and trying to redeem them at all costs, their indifference notwithstanding.

Aphorism 39 : The 'Antaryamitva' aspect of the Lord in the region of every one's heart is like the ground-water, deep inside the Earth; the 'Paratva' or the transcendental form of the Lord, ruling the High Heavens, is like the waters surging much beyond, on the periphery

of the vast Universe; the 'Vyuha' or the galaxy of Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, is like the remote milky ocean, not easy of access, while 'Vibhava' or the incarnate forms of the Lord, like Rama and Krishna, are like the swollen rivers whose waters have long ago rolled down to the ocean. All these are, therefore, unavailing, being beyond our reach. The 'Arccha' (Idol form) alone can be invoked at all times. Extending the above analogies, Idol-worship in temples and houses is comparable to the deep pockets of water in the river beds, the aftermath or legacy of the erstwhile flood waters, cool and refreshing.

Aph. 40 : In His Iconic manifestation (Image form), the Lord achieves what the vociferous Shastras have failed to secure. No doubt, the Shastras do impress the need for developing God-consciousness and pursuing the paths of discipline leading the Subjects on to the Lord's lotus feet, by expatiating on His great glory and decrying, side by side, the dangerous pursuit of sensual pleasures, which will consign them to the bottom-most depths of depravity. And yet, by dint of their age-long, accumulated tendencies and odours driven underground, the people have been straying farther and farther away from God, enslaved by the sense-objects. But, by exhibiting the bewitching charms in His Image form, He casts an irresistible spell on the hitherto ungodly Subjects, determined to run away from Him. Having enticed them and engendered in them the requisite taste for God-head, He is right there to redeem those, who, with their new-found avidity, cling to Him and seek refuge in His Image form.

Aph. 41-44 : The three types of 'Prapannas' (Supplicants), who seek the Lord's Grace in His 'Arccha' form, are :—

(1) The uninformed, like the generality of us, ill-equipped for the pursuit of other paths of discipline;

(2) The well-informed, like the great Preceptors, who had all the equipment, namely, the requisite knowledge and capacity to follow the other paths of discipline but discarded them outright, as totally repugnant to their essential nature,

and

(3) those soaked in God-Love, like the Azhvars, who, in their state of ecstasy, couldn't lift their minds off and steady themselves to go through all that exacting rigmarole, incidental to the pursuit of the other paths of discipline.

Aph. 45-50: while there is some kind of deficiency, in each of the three catagories, which compels them all to take refuge in the Lord, each category is characterised by that element which is over-whelming. Again,

these three categories hinge upon the three 'tatvas' or fundamental principles, namely, Achit (non-sentient matter), Chit (sentient beings) and Easwara (The Lord), respectively. Bound by their own past karma to the material world of sense-objects, the first category suffers from deficiency in knowledge and capacity (ignorance and incapacity). The profundity of Knowledge of those in the second category is the result of their 'Atma swaroopa gnana' or the enlightenment regarding the essential nature of the 'jiva' and its relationship with the Lord. It is love, too deep for words, that those in the last category bear to the Lord (Easvara), which precludes them from pursuing Means other than the Lord Himself. But then, all the three elements ean be present in a single Individual, that is, one and the same person. In a dialogue that ensued between Saint Nammazhvar and the Lord enshrined in Thirukkudandai (Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu), vide Thiruvoimozhi, fifth centum, eighth decad, third stanza, the Saint laid bare his predicament, saying "What shall I do for my protection? Who is there but you to salve me? As a matter of fact, I seek no relief through any other Means", meaning thereby that he is an ignoramus, devoid of the Knowledge and capacity to follow any other means for attaining salvation. But then, the Lord reminded the Saint of the fact that He had already dowered on him supreme knowledge and pat came the elucidation from the Saint that it was that very knowledge that stood in the way of his adopting any other Means for attaining Him, as it would come into conflict with his essential nature, as His vassal. Even if he could overlook this basic objection and pursue other paths of discipline, the knowledge bestowed on Him by the Supreme Lord was saturated with God-love (Bhakti) - 'Bhakti roopapanna gnana'. It is this God-love, that threw the Saint into a state of ecstasy, precluding recourse to any Means, other than the Lord Himself, which would demand steady and constant physical and mental exercise. Although the Azhwar revealed the existence, in him, of all the three categories, yet, the principal factor, that led him to surrender to the Lord's Grace, was his overwhelming love for Him Bhakti paravasya). In a secret mantra, known as 'Jithantha' "Avidyatho dheve.......... ", Sage Sownaka has referred to these three categories of Subjects, as being unaware of any Means other than the Lord, Who, for them, at once becomes the 'Means' and the 'End'. Mention has also been made of these three categories of 'Prapannas' by Goddess Mahalakshmi, in her 'Lakshmi tantram' in the sloka "Idham saranam agnanam.........".

aph: 51-53: The prapannas in the last category, intoxicated with God-love, however, get dislodged, at times, from the basic stance of 'Prapathi', namely, being solely resigned to His grace and dispensation without resorting to any other Means for attaining Him. Unable to brook any fur-

ther, separation from the Lord of their yearning, they make their own efforts to get at Him. This intense longing, on their part, tempts them to decorate and beautify themselves by way of attracting the Lord and hastening His approach. And, yet, when He did eventually come down to them, they would even turn Him out, scolding Him for the enormous delay on His part.

The object of enjoyment, namely, the Supreme Lord, being just the same, at all times, such conflieting reactions of the individual God-lovers only reflect their fluctuating mental attitudes. For instance, in Nacchiar Thirumozhi 8:3, Sri Andal felt like sustaining herself, when the Lord of her longing was not beside her, merely by singing in praise of His auspicious qualities. On the other hand, Nammazhvar's mental agony over his separation from the Lord is reflected in Thiruvoimozhi 8-1-8, where he feels tormented and tantalised hy the Lord's traits. Likewise, Sri Rama's arrows, the Lord's array of names, the music from His flute etc. have alternately been found soothing and oppressive, as seen from the utterances of the Azhvars, in their different mental states.

Aph. 54-59 : If 'Prapatti' (Surrender) is resorted to, as a personal effort of the individual soul and looked upon as a means for securing protection from the Lord, instead of looking upon the Lord as the sole Means, the Means and the End rolled into one, it would be just as ludicrous as a grown-up son calling uqon his father to sign a written undertaking to protect the former. What a pity, the son didn't realise that the father had, on his own, tended and nurtured the former, all along, under all circumstances, as a matter of inherent duty and that the step now taken by the son cut across the very basis of their natural relationship. The Creator is denoted by the letter A of the Pranava (AUM) while the creatures are denoted by the letter M of the Pranava. The dative case imposed on letter A and the intermediary letter U denote, respectively, the concomitant responsibility of the Lord for extending protection, by reason of His being the Supreme Master, and the final state attained by the Wards (Subjects) as a result of such protection. What the son has attempted, in the above case, is to get the name of the protector written on his own chest. If a 'Prapanna' compels God to save him, by his importunities, it smacks of disobedience and to expect God to be at his beck and call is equally impious and disloyal. No doubt, there is an inherent risk of 'Prapatti' being bracketed along with the other paths of discipline, namely, Karma Yoga, Gnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga, and looked upon as the means for attaining the Lord, which undoubtedly the other disciplines are. But the peculiar, rather, distinguishing character of 'Prapatti' is that it can not tolerate its being looked upon as the Means for attaining the Lord,

a case of self-effacement indeed. In the pursuit of all other Means, the effort of the Individual is pronounced and the 'Means' themselves bear the stamp of Shastraic sanction, as leading to 'Moksha' or final emancipation. The Lord, as the final Giver and Deliverer, has to naturally tolerate these indirect 'Means' as well as the personal effort of the Individual, which goes with the pursuit of those Means. Just the opposite is the case when the Lord is resorted to as the sole 'Means'. The Lord, as the direct "Means" and the sole Protector, *neither needs nor brooks any external aids.* 'Prapatti' is just a eonveyor or a mere mode and that is why it does not tolerate any other 'Means' besides declining to consider itself as a 'Means'.

Aph. 60-65 :Granting that 'Prapatti' is not the 'Means', is it not incumbent on the supplicant to have some sort of merit in him to ensure fruition ? Well, all that is needed on his part is the basic knowledge of His being the sole servitor of the Lord, subject to His exclusive protection (atma gnana) and against this back-ground, not to obstruct the influx of the Lord's protective benevolence but remain in a state of passive quiescence (aprathishedha). If, on the other hand, he takes special steps for securing accelerated result, it seriously offends against the Lord's posture as the Eternal Master, committed to protect His Subjects, as a matter of His own personal gain, brooking, at the same time, no external aid.

Apprehending the enormity of the problem of salvation, on the one hand, and the danger of head-long immersion into the ocean of Samsara, on the other, one might be tempted to try all methods to escape from the danger and, in the process, seek to propitiate the Lord through one's own personal efforts. By this, however, he will only be courting a greater danger, namely, the effacement of his essential nature of exclusive dependence on the Lord. The Subject will, therefore, do well not to move from one danger to another. But then, the Lord is said to await the desire of the Subject for protection at His hands—'Rakshyapeksham pratheekshathe'—and so, the desire to be protected by the Lord should precede the latter's action. The desire in question is, however, nothing more than submission to the Lord's protection without turning one's back against it. If this virtual sanction on the part of the Individual is needed for the Lord to go ahead, can it not be regarded as a 'Means' ? No, it can not be. As a matter of fact, when a person is advised by another to pursue a certain path of discipline for the former's betterment, the former agrees to do so and then pursues the particular 'Means'. His consent to pursue the said 'Means', can not, therefore, be considered as yet another 'Means'. Again, this consent for submission to the Lord's protection can be expected only from a sentient being and not from inanimate objects. If a sentient being submits to the Lord's will, both before and after salvation, it only shows the realis-

ation by him of his true or essential nature of exclusive dependence on the Lord and can not be considered as the Means for the Lord's initial protection and further caressing. Further, the advantage, a sentient being has over the inanimate objects, is that, in the pre-salvation stage, the Individual gratefully acknowledges the very valuable spade work done by the Lord in reclaiming him, an acknowledgement which finds such lusty expression as :

"My Lord ! You redeemed and reconditioned my foul mind."

"You endowed me with a facile mind, capable of worshipping You with intense love" etc. etc.

And, in the post-salvation period, on the yonder side, these very Subjects exhibit keenness in serving the Lord and feel blissfully happy, looking to the Lord's own delight over such service.

Aph 66-69 : *The meeting ground of man's free will and God's free Grace:*

If neither the 'Prapatti' nor the merit, if any, in the supplicant could be regarded as the 'Means', is there any other 'Means' at all, for the supplicant's salvation ? Of course, the only 'Means' is the Lord's remembrance of the individual soul in the light of his ultimate redemption. Although the Lord has always been remembering His coveted property, the Individual soul, and thinking of his reclamation, all the time, yet the reclamation didn't materialise so far, as he (the Individual) had not earlier ceased to think of himself as his own mentor and protector. It is only when the Individual gives up his perverse role of self-protection, the Lord's saving grace can become operative. A striking illustration of the perversity of the free will of the Individual resisting the free operation of God's Grace is provided by the following anecdote: When the great Acharya, Nanjeeyar, once visited a Sri Vaishnava disciple at his sick-bed, the later implored the Jeeyar to say that which shelters one in the last moments of one's life. Pat came the admonishing reply from the Jeeyar that the cessation, the utter collapse of the thought of self-protection, right from the present moment, would afford the requisite shelter in the last moments as well.

Aph : 70-72 The question next posed is : Although the salvation of the individual soul comes off only through the Lord's Grace, how can the Individual, as the beneficiary, be expected to shed all thoughts about his future and remain absolutely passive ? The answer is : the individual soul is not the beneficiary, as such, but the Lord, who, as the Proprietor (Swami), the owner of us all, reaps the happiness of reclamation and enjoyment of the lost property, restored back to Him.

Self-effort and self-enjoyment are, however, inherent in the individual soul, fully capacitated by the Lord for a career of activity, by virtue of his knowledge, ability to act and enjoy the fruits. These two aspects of self-effort and self-enjoyment can be eliminated only when the Individual truly

grasps his essential nature of exclusive dependence on the Lord (Paratantrya), being His sole servitor (ananyarha Seshatva). 'Paratantrya' will cut out self-effort while 'Seshatva' will do away with the sense of self-delight and self-enjoyment, provided that these two fundamental characteristics, marking out the essential nature of the individual soul, are fully grasped and sincerely lived up to. The inherent knowledge and potentiality of the Individual, hitherto harnessed to self-effort and self-enjoyment, will thenceforward be turned towards selfless service, rendered unto the Lord, solely for His pleasure, with no tinge of personal egoism.

Aph : 73-79 : As between the two principal attributes of the Individual soul, namely 'Gnatrutva' (bliss of wisdom) and 'Seshatva' (Service to the Lord), why should the latter alone (servanthood) be taken as the essential attribute of the soul, in preference to the former (bliss of wisdom) ? This is examined below:

If 'Gnatrutva' is held to be the sole attribute of the 'Jivatma' (Individual soul), this is also the attribute of the Lord and hence it is necessary to bring out the distinguishing feature of the Individual soul. If, on the other hand, 'Seshatva' is held to be the sole attribute of the 'Jiva', this attribute is appli cable to 'Achit' or non-sentient matter, as well, and it cannot, therefore, be the distinguishing feature of the 'Jiva'. And so, both the attributes of the 'jiva', namely, 'Gnatrutva' and 'Seshatva' are attracted. We now come back to the question as to which of these two should be considered the essential attribute of the 'Jiva'. Could it be 'Gnatrutva', which differentiates the 'Jiva', from the non-sentient matter or 'Seshatva', which differentiates 'Jiva' from 'Easvaara' (Lord) ? 'Seshatva' or Service unto the Lord, being that which sustains the individual soul and makes it thrive, this attribute comes to the fore, relegating the other attribute of 'Gnatrutva' to the back- ground. The assumption of 'Gnatrutva', as the essential attribute of the 'Jiva', would place it on a par with the Lord and this savours of 'Advaita' or non-difference between the two entities. This is effectively quelled by the 'Seshatva' aspect of the 'Jiva'. It was to get an authoritative pronouncement in this regard that Sri Koorathazhvan was sent by Sri Ramanuja to that great preceptor, Thirukkottiyur Nambi. Azhvan had to wait at the preceptor's door for six long months, to get the tag, comprising just two words with which Saint Nammazhvar's Thiruvoimozhi, Eighth Centum, eighth decad, second stanza begins:

"Adiyenullan, Udalullan", meaning that the Supreme Lord is inside Nammazhvar's soul and and his body. The first word points to the Lord inside the Azhwar's soul and the soul has been referred to as "Adiyen" (servant) and hence it could be gathered that the Azhwar identified his

soul as the servant of the Lord, thereby bringing to the fore the 'Seshatva' (servanthood) attribute of the soul. This distinct characteristic of the soul can, however, hold water only if the said attribute had been inherent in it, right from the time the soul came into being, instead of creeping into it, later on, in the light of certain extraneous circumstances, which cropped up then. This objection can also be ruled out, vide Periazhvar's utterance, "Thirumale! nonumunakku *pazhavadiyen*" – 'My Lord ! *I am your servant from time immemorial*'.

At the same time, the possibility of certain attributes creeping into the soul, in coures of time, due to nescience and other corrupting influences can not be ruled out. For example, there are the misconceived notions of independence (Swatantrya) and service rendered to lesser deities (anyaseshatva) and so on. Surely, these are not the natural attributes of the 'Jiva', inherent in him, right from the beginning, but later acquisitions, which could be discarded by him, in the same way he caught hold of them. The super-imposed attribute of 'Swatantrya' militates against the built-in attribute of 'Seshatva' and puts a terrible curb on it. Even if this independence dies out, the other corrupting influence, namely, 'anyaseshatva' or service unto others, will be a bar to service unto the Supreme Lord whose exclusive vassal the individual soul is and should be, and the essential attribute of 'Seshatva' thus gets clouded. Whereas the outter coating of 'Swatantrya' (Independence), manifesting itself in conceit and arrogance, can be blotted out under the wholesome influence of a sound preceptor, leaving no trace behind, the basic attribute of 'Seshatva' stays on for ever. If the 'Jiva' (Individual soul) who ought to be identified, as pointed out earlier, with 'Seshatva', being the sole servant of the Lord, is identified instead, in terms of the village of birth, clan etc., it will only breed egotism. There is a sloka in Sri Pancharatra, "Ekanthi vyapheshtavyo............", prohibiting this kind of identification of a 'Prapanna' to whom Lord Vishnu is everything, village, clan and all else.

Aph. 80-82 : It has been emphasised, all along, that there is no question of the individual soul indulging in self-protection, when the Lord is regarded as the sole Means. The vivid examples of Sita, Draupadhi and Thirukkannamangai Andan should easily drive home this point Sita could have invoked her extra-ordinary powers to destroy her enemies, all by herself, and get back to Rama but she wouldn't do so. Instead, she made it clear to Hanuman that it would be befiitting a hero of the calibre of Rama if he did come to Lanka, fought out the enemies and took her back; she added that it was but meet that she should wait till then, eking out her miserable existence. Draupadhi's case was different in that she didn't have the spiritual strength and prowess of Sita and yet she (Draupadhi) had

resigned herself wholly to Lord Krishna's Grace and it was indeed most remarkable, rather extra-ordinary, that she gave up her body consciousness and the shyness which goes with it, which would have induced her to cling to her saree, an act of self- protection. With her pair of hands lifted over-head, she offered no resistance whatsoever to the dastardly Duschasan when he attempted to disrobe her. And then, there is the case of Thirukkannamangai Andan. One day, he witnessed a fierce encounter between one servant and another, as the former's dog had been struck by the latter and, in the scuffle, the owner of the dog killed the other man and then killed himself too. This was an instant eye-opener to Andan, who sized up the situation, placing himself in the position of the dog and substituting the omni-scient, omni-potent Lord for the owner of the dog. If a frail human could give up his very life, all for the sake of the pet dog in his keeping, how much more could be expected of the Lord, if only Andan entrusted himself to His sole keeping. That very moment. he gave up all his personal activities, reduced himself to the abject position of a dog, crouching in a kenne—like room near the temple-gate, at the feet of Lord Pattaravi, the presiding Deity. If these persons set the pace for the behaviour of the Individuals, looking upon the Lord as the sole Means (Upaya), the examples of Lakshmana, Jatayu, the Vulture king, Pillai Thirunarayoor Arayar and Chintayanthi throw light on the cultivation of self-less love to God even before the reaping of the fruit (Upeya), the final bliss of Divine Service. The very act of cultivating love to God is an end in itself, braught with felicity.

Aph. 83-85 : When the exiled Rama set out for the forests, Lakshmana pleaded lustily that he be allowed to accompany Rama, for sheer survival and service. Like fishout of water, he just couldn't stay apart from Rama and could thrive only by serving him in all possible ways. Even while rendering such service, Lakshmana would not exercise his own volition but seek the orders of Rama. Rama couldn't butyield to devotionof such a high order. With none to compete with him, Lakshmana is said to have developed insatiable hunger for service, during the long period of exile, like unto a person cooking his own food, with none to share it, eating all the food prepared by him, the remnants of food already prepared as well as the entire food currently cooked, so as not to waste any, thus inflating his food capacity. Such a person would hardly be in a position to join in community dining, would rather feel ill-at-ease in any suchcompany. This was very much in evidence, during Rama's coronation, at the end of the exile. Bharata and Satrugna, each rendered a particular service but Lakshmana wouldn't be satisfied that way, and, therefore, held theParasol (the snow-white umbrella over Rama's crowned head), in one hand, and the white bushy fan, in the

other. (This is not mentioned in Valmiki Ramayana but can be found in Padmapurana, Uttara Kanda, 49th Chapter). This is a typical case of insatiate longing for Divine Service, the very source of the servant's sustenance and survival.

In the course of his wanderings in the forest, during exile, Sri Rama set up camp at Panchavati, in the company of Jatayu, the Vulture King (Aranya Kanda XV-19) After sometime, when Sita was being lifted away by Ravana, she alerted Jatayu, who was dosing off in a nearby tree. Thereupon, the aged Vulture counselled Ravana to give up his nefarious intentions, which, however, fell on deaf ears. The valiant vulture then decided to give Ravana grim battle and either rescue Sita or die in the attempt. Jatayu Maharaja was mortally wounded.

Pillai Thirunaraiyur Araiyar went with the members of his family to worship Vedanarayana, the Deity enshrined in Thirunarayanapuram, near Thiruchirappalli. When they were all offering worship inside the temple, heretics set fire to the temple and tongues of flames came shooting down, from the thatched roof. In the melee that ensued, people ran helter-skelter for safety, with no thought of the Deity inside. But Araiyar, with his profusion of love for God would not desert the Image of his Lord, as long as there was life in him. His family members followed suit and all of them kept on embracing the Image, braving the physical blisters and gave up their bodies in the glorious task.

The classical Rasakreeda of Lord Krishna and the Gopis of Vrindavan was going on. On hearing the enchanting strains from Sri Krishna's flute, other Gopis, near about, felt drawn to it and while some of them darted forth, defying the elders, there were others who dared not do so and reluctantly kept in-doors. One Gopi of the latter category just couldn't stand the separation from Sri Krishna and breathed her last. In those fleeting moments when the blissful music of the magic flute of the Lord poured into her ears, she enjoyed the fruits of all her accumulated merit and likewise suffered the agony of all her past sins, when her passage to the Lord was obstructed. Unfettered by merit (Punya) or demerit (Papa), her life ebbed out automatically. Unlike jatayu Maharaja and Pillai Thirunaraiyur Arayar, who gave up their bodies, in the case of this Gopi, the body fell off, by itself. The original name of the Gopi is not known but she has come to be known as 'Chintayanti', a name derived from the above episode.

The foregoing illustrations will have amply shown how the supplicants should conduct themselves, (1) in regard to the 'Upaya', the Means adopted by them, and (2) in the 'Upeya' state of fruition. While resorting

to the Lord, as the sole Means, self-protection should be eschewed as was done by Sita, one should pin one's faith solely on the Lord, oblivious of extraneous considerations like public opinion, innate sense of shame, shyness etc., as Draupadhi did, virtually dissolving herself in Sri Krishna, her Rufuge, and all personal activities, which run counter to one's exclusive dependence on the Supreme Lord, should be given up as Thirukkannamangai Andan did.

In the 'Upeya' state of fruition, the individual soul should, like Lakshmana, develop such an intense love for the Master as to pine for service unto Him, at all times, and in all possible ways, according to His dictates; be ready to put an end to one's life in the face of an impending mishap for the Master, the sole Refuge, emulating Pillai Thirunaraiyur Araiyar's example, and just cease to exist, like Chintayanthi, when the longed for union with the Lord does not materialise, unable to stand the frustration-automatic non-survival.

Aph : 86-89 : The aforesaid episode of the Araiyar raises a point of order. Giving up one's body in the Divine service is postulated in Agni, Vayu and Vamana Puranas, Mahabharata etc., as a 'Means' for attaining 'Moksha', the final emancipation. It was, therefore, not proper for a 'Prapanna' like Arayar to have had recourse to the above 'Means' and given up his body. But then, the fact of the matter is that the Arayar did not give up his body as a means to attain the Lord, in pursuance of any such extraneous mandate but out of an innate and irresistible love to God. A 'Prapanna' should certainly give up the performance of an act enjoined by the Shastras, as a 'Means' for attaining the Lord but if he performed the self-same act, as an end in itself, out of supreme love to the Lord, it is perfectly in order. Whereas the former aspect is to be studiously eschewed by a 'Prapanna', the latter aspect is highly commendable and adds a feather to his cap. As a matter of fact, such an act is projected by the surging love to God, swelling up the Prapanna's bosom, and cannot be given up even though an identical act has been stipulated by the Shastras as a 'Means' for attaining 'Moksha'. It is a matter of common knowledge that even in regard to misplaced affections, as between a prostitute and her paramour, the latter goes to the extent of sacrificing his life at the altar of the deity, if by doing so, the former could be cured of an otherwise incurable malady. If this be the case in regard to the ill-directed love towards a mean object, what to say about the devotee's love to God, the true target of his love, the sole Refuge !

The point at issue is whether a particular act is performed as an end in itself (Purusharta) or as a 'Means' (Upaya); if the former, it is not in the

least objectionable even though it may overlap acts prescribed by the Shastras as 'Upaya', such as residence in pilgrim centres, etc., and it has to be placed in the category of 'Upeya anushtana', (act done as an end in itself) and not in that of 'Upaya anushtana' (act done as a 'Means' for the attainment of the desired goal).

Aph : 90-93 : Even otherwise, the extra-ordinary behaviour of a 'Prapanna', thrown off his moorings by the sheer ecstasy of God-love, can not be criticised as improper, on the ground that such a behaviour contravenes the canons of 'Ananya upayatva' (non-invoking means other than God Himself), 'Ananya Upeyatva' (catering to the Lord's sole delight) and 'Ananya Dhaivatva' (abstenance from worshipping other minor deities). Actually, all these three types of apparent transgressions were noticeable in the case of the Azhvars, who were nevertheless right in the vanguard of the array of 'Prapannas'. 'Ananya upayatva' was given the go-by when Sri Andal performed special rites for securing speedy union with her Lord; Nammazhvar was tempted to carry his tale of woe to the public at large, bitterly complaining to them about the cruel unresponsiveness of the Lord, while Thirumangai Azlwar actually put through such proceedings to accelerate the get-together of the Lord and His importunate lover (the Azhvar). 'Ananya Upeyatva' (catering to the Lord's sole delight with no tinge of egotism or self-enjoyment) was tinkered with, when Thirumangai Azhvar resorted to the worship of the Deity at Thiruppullani, as a measure of self-delight, prepared for the contingency of an indifferent Deity not conferring anything on him. (Peria Thirumozhi IX-3-9). Again, Nammazhvar, in his mental transformation as a feminine lover pining for God, thought in terms of arraigning God at the bar of Public opinion, so as to reap the bliss of wearing on her locks, the Tulsi garland of the Lord and enjoy its cool fragrance (Thiruvoimozhi V-3-1). 'Ananya Dhaivatva' (abstenance from worshipping other minor deities) was compromised by Sri Andal, when she propitiated 'Kaman' (Manmata, the minor deity inducing amorous love) and worshipped him and his younger brother (Saman) and even addressed the former as her Master (Peruman)—(Natchiar Thirumozhi I-1 and I-8).

It is the exuberance of these love-intoxicated super-personalities that made them overshoot their mark, the natural corollary to such a state of mind. Their actions and utterances should not, therefore, be judged by the norms applicable to the commonalty and commented upon adversely, by adopting the ruthless line of thinking that mistakes are mistakes by whomsoever committed, whatever be the provocation. The Azhwars and Andal were no doubt endowed with supreme knowledge by the Lord Himself and they could, therefore, be expected to be above criticism. But then,

their knowledge was not of the 'dry-as-dust' stock but one saturated with, rather transformed into love (intellectual love of God). Their knowledge ripened into love to God, too deep for words, and, in the exuberance of such love, they were thrown into a state of mental imbalance (Bhakti paravasya). Acts performed by them in such a state of intoxication (prema) are indeed praiseworthy and surely these are not comparable with the transgressions committed by the common people, due to immaturity and ignorance, in a relatively unevolved state, still under the grip of nescience. The excesses (athi pravritti) committed by the Azhvars will not offend the Lord the 'Siddhopaya' (Means and the End rolled into one), because it is He. who imparted to the Azhvars profound knowledge which, in turn, launched them into the boundless ocean of God-love. The Lord would have, therefore, correctly interpreted the Azhwar's actions, as above, the apparent transgressions, as but the inevitable facets of God-love seeking quick consummation by the Lord, but terribly impatient during the intervening period, due again to their insatiate longing for incessant communion with the Lord. The acts in question should appropriately be deemed to pertain to the domain of 'Upeya' (final state of bliss) and not to that of 'Upaya' (Means). Herein lies the chief merit of surrender unto the Lord, looking upon Him as the 'Siddhopaya', the harmonious blending in God of the 'Means' and the 'End', like milk serving both as Medicine and food. Unlike those helplessly hanging on, indefinitely, to 'Means' other than the Lord, when the results get delayed, the Siddhopaya approach yields quick results. Acts performed by the individual souls yearning to attain to Him with the least possible delay, go to alert the Lord who would not like to be dislodged from the position of 'Ready Means' and, therefore, hasten the deliverance.

Aph. 94–98 : Several spiritual qualities get inducted into the Individual, by virtue of the God-love developed by him, and, with the intensification of such love (Bhakti), those spiritual qualities also shine forth, displacing the erstwhile dross-the lust for worldly pleasures.

'Paramatmani Yo raktho
Viraktho aparamatmani'

See also Pey Azhwar's Thiruvandadi — stanza 14 and Thiruvoimozhi IV-9-10.

The two outstanding spiritual qualities are 'Sama' (शम) or restraining the mind (thought) and other internal organs and 'Dhama' (दम) controlling the outer sense-organs and actions. A disciple possessing these two qualities is bound to attract the Preceptor, who feels immensely pleased and imparts to him knowledge of 'Thirumantra' (Aum Namo Narayanaya), the text and its meaning. With the meaning of Thirumantra ingrained in the disci-

ple, by dint of the Preceptor's grace, the Supreme Lord, forming the very theme of the Mantra, comes into his possession. With the Lord in his possession, entry into the high Heavens, the destined Land, is assured. Going through the whole gamut in the reverse order, it will be seen that the ascent of the disciple to the Heavens is achieved through the Lord, acquired through a knowledge of 'Thirumantra', imparted by the gracious Preceptor, attracted by the disciple's qualities of 'Sama' and 'Dhama'.

Aph. 99-101 : The spiritual qualities of 'Sama' and 'Dhama' are needed alike by the people in all the three categories, namely, those hankering after Riches, the ritual-ridden 'Upasaka', striving for the acquisition of special powers or specific achievements, and the 'Prapannas'. While lamenting over the dead-body of Ravana, Mandodari recalled how Ravana had conquered all the three worlds through the conquest over his own sense-organs, keeping them under the severest restraint. Thiruvoimozhi IV-1-9, Thiruchanda viruttam, stanzas 76 and 95 refer to the rigorous discipline displayed by men of these three categories respectively. Of these three eategories, the 'Prapannas' need these qualities most. Actually, the other two categories have been mentioned here only to bring out the relative superiority of the 'Prapannas' over them. Whereas the restraints to be observed by those in the first two categories are confind only to acts specifically prohibited by the Shastras as, for example, sexual union with other than one's wife, it behoves the 'Prapanna', wedded to exclusive love of God (Ananya bhogyatva), to go one step further and eschew sexual contact even with his wife. Although copulation with one's wife is not prohibited by the Shastras and is not, therefore, sinful, as such, there is the lurking danger, as in the case of all sensual pleasures, of one getting caught up in the vortex of carnal lust, a menacing challenge to the Prapanna's basic commitment of total love to God, to the exclusion of every thing else. It is but logical that quite a rigorous and exacting standard of discipline has to be adopted by a 'Prapanna', as the exclusive servant of the Lord, totally dependent on Him and not given to self-delight and enjoyment, so as to be able to cater to the sole delight of the Lord. Sri Manavala Mahamuni even wonders, in his 'Upedesa Ratna maala', how many there are, who have fully grasped the tenets deeply imbedded in 'Srivachana Bhooshanam', and even among those few, how many could actually live up to those tenets, perhaps, just a sprinkling.

Aph. 102-104 : Sexual union with one's wife falls into two distinct strata, namely, the sensual and the spiritual; the former is the carnal enjoyment carried on, for the appeasement of one's lust, while the latter is the function of a 'Grihasta' (married man), performed as a matter

of religious duty for the limited purpose of progeniture, the propagation of the family. Even this latter function is required to be eschewed by the Prapanna, assuming that he is not already an addict of the former category. No doubt, it is very difficult to wean one away from the sensual pleasures, indulged for ages, and in the case in question, the Subject has to give up the habit, stage by stage This can be achieved by different means by the three types of prapannas, referred to in aphorism 43, ante. In the case of the Azhvars, who, in their exuberance of God-love, sought refuge in the Lord, their absorption in the bewitching charms of the Lord's beauty automatically results in ridding them of the sensual pleasures of which they just become unaware. In the case of the great preceptors (Acharyas) who surrendered themselves at the feet of the Lord, due to the profundity of their spiritual knowledge, it is the Lord's cathartic Grace that makes them abhor the obnoxious sensual pleasures and diverts their sole attention unto Him. The 'Prapannas' in the third category, with their basic insufficiency, both in regard to knowledge and capacity, steer clear of the sensual pleasures by scrupulously treading the path set by the righteous elders of yore. It is the fear of going astray and thereby coming to grief that makes them rigidly adhere to the rigorous standards of righteousness, set by the Elders.

Aph. 105-108 : Giving up the age-long pursuit of sensual pleasures, which had a terrible hold on the erstwhile victim, is indeed extremely difficult. Distaste for the so-called enjoyment and the abhorrence thereof, leading to the final disentanglement, can come off only through the Lord's redemptive Grace. As and when the distaste sets in, it can be presupposed that the Subject has had the grim realisation of the obnoxious nature of the erstwhile allurement, the fatal fascination of all that dirt and devilry, stench and effluvium in the female partner. But then, this can not be the main reason for the distaste in question. The more important incentive for the transformation is the realisation of one's essential nature of '*ananya bhogyatva*', that is, catering to the sole delight of the Lord and hence the paramount need for not playing the truant, by indulging in self-delight and sense-enjoyment. If it is, however, still argued that the obnoxious facets of sensual enjoyment repel the Subjects, even as the Lord's numerous auspicious attributes attract them, the correction has to be administered that submission to the Lord is not conditioned by the auspicious traits in Him but resorted to by virtue of the natural and inalienable bonds subsisting between the Creator and the Creature and it is this element of natural compulsion, rather cohesion, that operates as the motive force for giving up sensual enjoyment and turning towards God.

Aph : 109-114 :—Were it not disinterested love of God, love for its own sake, but love excited by the Lord's auspicious attributes, there should

be an end of such love during those moments when the devotee feels frustrated and finds God bereft of all those endearing auspicious traits. But it is not so, as seen from the behaviour and utterances of the Azhvars, cited lower down. So also, if it is held that distaste for sensual enjoyment results from the mere sight of its grotesqueness and drawbacks, this is belied by the natural experience in life. Even right in the midst of harrowing miseries, visited in quick succession, people cling to 'Samsara' (family life) with incredible avidity. Attachment to God and detachment from sensual enjoyment are, therefore, mainly attributable to the worthiness of the former and the unworthiness of the latter. While exaltation of spirit and exuberant overflow of emotion charcterise Nammazhvar when he perceives and enjoys the presence of God, deep dejection and extreme desolation of spirit are conspicuous when the Lord keeps away from him. In Thiruvoimozhi V-3-5, Nammazhvar bitterly reproaches the Lord as extremely selfish, unsympathetic, elusive, time-serving, deceitful, unfathomable etc and yet finds his tyrannical mind clinging to the Lord as the sole Refuge, under all circumstances. In Peria Thirumezhi, XI-8-7, Thirumangai Azhvar picturesquely brings home the inalienability of the 'Master-Servant' relationship between God and Man, whatever be the vicissitudes. Addressing the Lord, he says : "My Lord ! even if You, generally known to be sweet as a sugar cane, turn bitter like the margosa fruit, I, Your eternal servant, will covet nothing else but Your comely feet, like unto the caterpillar, bred on the margosa leaf, eating nothing but that".

Seeing that Lakshmana, according to his own admission to Hanuman, 'ahamasyavaro bratha gunair dhasyam upagataha', was enthralled into serving Sri Rama and following Him in exile, by the latter's sweet qualities, how can it be held that submission to the Lord is not motivated by an appreciation of His auspicious traits ? If service rendered to the Lord, linked up with the inherent characteristic (Seshatva or servitude) of the Individual as His eternal servant, stands on a higher pedestal than service induced by the Lord's sweet qualities. could it be said that Lakshmana's service stood relegated to the lower order ? Not at all, is the answer. Lakshmana, an incarnation of Adi-sesha (first servant) was devoted to Rama, right from the cradle (balyath prabruthi susnigdaha), and, in the above context, Lakshmana adduced yet another consideration for his constant attendance on Rama. Service unto the Lord by virtue of the essential nature of the individual soul (Seshatva), not conditioned by any extraneous considerations or inducements, is thus of primary importance and all else is relegated to a secondary place.

Felicitating Sita on her fidelity to her husband (giving up the Palace and all its wealth and relations and following Rama into exile). Anasuya,

wife of Sage Atri, exhorted that the husband needs to be venerated as God Himself, be he in town or wood, ill or well. Swayed by modesty, the bashful Sita stood with down-cast eyes and spoke out : "My love for Rama is spontaneous and yet, people are likely to construe that I love him because of his excellence, both physical and mental. It is indeed difficult for me to prove that my fidelity has no strings attached to it and stands by itself without any external provacation or inducements, as Rama and his excellence can never remain apart. My fidelity will remain constant even if he were to be the exact reverse of what he is."

Well, if service flowing from the essential nature of the individual soul takes the pride of place, as elucidated in the foregoing paragraphs, how are we to reconcile this with the aberrations pointed out earlier, marking a departure from this basic stand ? The self-effort indulged, in those cases, was only due to the exuberance of love to God and the lover's impatience to get at Him. This up-surge of love has its origin in the ingrained bond of 'Master-Servant' relationship, which, however, stands by itself, not dependent on external aids or inducements, like the Lord's Grace and excellence. This being the cyclic operation, little wonder that the love-intoxicated Saints (Azhwars) strayed into the forbidden ground of self-effort, invoking the grace of other minor deities etc., for sheer survival through speedy restoration to God. It needs to be appreciated that the so-called aberrations were inevitable in the case of an exalted band of lovers, who just couldn't exist without partaking of the bliss of His company, by reason of the primary bond of 'Seshatva' subsisting between them and the Lord. (adhyanta bhakti yukthanam na sastram nyvacha kramaha).

O O O

CANTO 2

(Second Prakarana)

Aphorisms 115-120 : In the concluding portion of the last Canto it was elucidated that it is the knowledge of the essential nature of the individual soul (its exclusive dependence on the Lord, as His sole servitor, catering to His sole delight with no tinge of egotism or self-enjoyment) that constitutes the chief cause for the discarding, by the Individual, of all ungodly things likesensual enjoyment and his clinging to God. And now, it is being pointed out that the very same cause comes to the fore in the matter of the Individual giving up all other 'Means' of attaining God (Prapakantara parityaga), namely, karma, Gnana and Bhakti yogas and seeking refuge in Him, as the sole Means, being exclusively dependent on Him. If non-resort to the disciplines of karma, Gnana and Bhakti Yogas is, however, attributed to lack of the requisite calibre (knowledge and capacity) in the Individual, then there is the off-chance of his pursuing those means, if and when he acquires this kind of eligibility. Such a contingency can be ruled out, if the 'Upayantaras', 'Means' other than the Lord Himself, are discarded on the ground of their being repugnant to the essential nature of the individual soul.

Is it proper to adopt such a hostile attitude towards the other paths of discipline, seeing that these are also enjoined by the Scriptures, as 'Means' for the attainment of 'Moksha' ? Well, these are still the 'Means' for those who have not, as yet, realised their essential nature of total dependence on the Lord and consequently do not, hesitate to indulge in self-effort. To the 'Gnostic', who has the true knowledge of the essential nature of the soul, 'means', other than the Lord Himself, spell danger, as they cut across his exclusive dependence on the Lord. The danger sensed by the Gnostic is expressed in such words as : "My Lord ! are you showing me the so-called path (Means) for attaining You, thereby ridding, from Your proximity, poor me, this vassal of Yours, solely dependent on You ?" The fear is about the Saint straying into the region of self-effort, which, as repeatedly pointed out earlier, runs directly counter to the essential nature of the soul. In the Jithantha Sloka "Kaleshvapi Cha sarveshu dhikshu sarvasu ehachy-

uta, sareerecha gathau chapi vartate may mahat bhayam", the Sage trembles with fright at the mere thought of pursuing other means, such as karma Yoga etc., entailing the selection of an appropriate time, place and a lot of bodily exertion to boot. An already bewildered Arjuna, further dazed by Lord krishna's discourses on 'karma Yoga', 'Gnana Yoga' and 'Bhakti Yoga', got his deep dejection dispelled by the Lord's final disclosure of His being the sole Means, quite in keeping with the essential nature of the individual souls.

Aph. 121-126 : If the adoption of 'Means', other than the Lord Himself, to attain Him, was not opposed to the essential nature of the ndividual soul, there will be no need to treat the inadvertent slipping into 'Upayantara' (adoption of means other than the Lord) by a 'Prapanna', as a transgression calling for atonement (prayaschitta) - vide Lakshmitantra Sloka-"apaya samplave sadhyah prayaschittam samacharet prayaschitteriyam satra yat punah saranam vrajet". The atonement prescribed is to remind oneself of the "Prapatti" already performed and the implications thereof, in a mood of repentence, so as not to repeat a similar transgression. The atonement in question does not, by-any-means, extend to redoing (पुनःकरणं), 'Prapatti', which, if put through more than once, loses all its meaning and sanctity, Unless the 'Upayantara pravritti', (i. e.) straying into the domain of 'Karma Yoga' etc., is deemed to be a transgression, there is no question of atonement thereof. Unless drinking liquor (सुरापान्) is deemed to be a sinful act, atonement thereof would not have been prescribed. The very fact that atonement has been prescribed, for a certain act, is proof-positive that the act in question is sinful, needing expiation. Thirukkurugaippiran Pillan emphatically condemns the pursuit of means other than the Lord, tainted by egoistic self-effort, by likening it to a spec of liquor defiling the entire water kept in a gold pot, its special sanctity notwithstanding. In this analogy, the individual soul takes the place of the gold pot, the sacred water contained in it stands for Bhakti (love to God) and egotism typifies the spec of liquor. But for the unwholesome involvement of egotism. the natural flowering of the individual soul, with its inherent purity of knowledge, heightened by its sole dependence on God (ananyarha seshatva), into 'Bhakti', would have been the excellent ideal. But egotism has badly disturbed the whole setting.

In remote islands, where the sea-borne gems can be had in superabundance, and curiously, the islanders go in for ornaments made of conchshell, instead of gems, the precious gems are liberally exchanged for mere shells, brought to them by the foreigners visiting the islands. Could it be held that the gems are just the equivalent of the things given in the so-called exchange ? Likewise, can it be held that a lemon fruit has secured a King-

dom, simply because a Subject placed reverently a lemon fruit at the feet of a munificent King, and got a liberal gift of a good bit of territory, at the King's pleasure ? An emphatic 'NO' is the answer. Even so, 'Moksha samrajya' or the Kingdom of Heaven, gained by the individual soul, at the Lord's pleasure, should not be equated with the 'Means' employed by the individual. In the aforesaid examples, there is at least a semblance of exchange, awfully slender and unequal though. The conch-shells and lemon fruit were actually in the possession of the respective visitors, which they could call their own. But the individual soul has scarcely anything of his own to offer to the Lord, as he and his so-called possessions vest in God. It can only be a case of giving back to the Lord what had already been bestowed by Him. It would but be fair, if the individual soul pining for making a love-gift to the Lord, made this position abundantly clear to the Lord. Such a gift is no gift, in the real sense, and can not, therefore, be a means for attaining the Lord. It is no better than the young boy passing through the samskara (sacramental rite) of 'Chaula' (hair-cutting ceremony) making an oblation (dhakshina) to his own Father, who is actually celebrating the function. If, however, the gift is ostensibly made, as if the thing offered is the individual's own property, it will be highly improper, being no more than the gift of a stolen property and the theft will easily come to light. This is like a person stealing, overnight, the grand jewel adorning Lord Ranganatha's winsome chest and palming it off in public, on the following day, as his gift to the Lord.

The cantankerous tendency to adduce one thing or the other, as the 'Means' for attaining the Lord, is not only mischevous but positively harmful. Take the case of a wife looking upon her married life with her husband merely as a means for eking out her livelihood and demanding from the husband, every morning, the wages for the sensual enjoyment he had through her, the previous night-sounds grotesque indeed. But how much more grotesque should it be if the Individual employed, as a 'Means' for attaining Moksha, the love generated in him towards God, by the latter's auspicious qualities, instead of looking upon it as an end in itself ?

Aph. 127-128 : It seems pertinent to examine, at this stage, the propriety of the scriptures prescribing these 'upayantaras' (means other than the Lord Himself) as 'Hita' (the way or the Means) for attaining Moksha, although they are bristling with many a flaw, as pointed out all along. It is said, "Atmava arey dhrashtavyah srotavyo manthavyo nithithyasithavyah", Oh, disciple ! the Super Soul, the Lord is the One to be visualised, heard of, reflected on and meditated upon.

And now, let us take the case of an youngster suffering from a fell disease, who is, however, not amenable to taking a bitter potion, which will

straightaway cure the illness. All the same, the anxious mother, administers that very medicine along with some sweet beverage which the youngster usually drinks with great relish. The Scriptures, with the tender solicitude of a thousand such mothers put together, would like to bring within their purview, all the Subjects, whatever be their evolution, predilection and behaviour, holding out a recipe for each, according to his taste. The grand Panacea of 'Siddhopaya', the Lord as the direct 'Means', will undoubtedly cut out the terrific malady of Samsara with the utmost expedition. But this means total eradication of the time-honoured technique of self-effort, and it will not, therefore, pass muster with the myriads of men, steeped in self-effort,down the ages, utterly oblivious of the true (essential) nature of the souls. The next best will, therefore, be to put them on a path of discipline involving their own effort but nevertheless directed to the final goal of Moksha or attainment of the Lord, like unto a sugar-coated pill cloaking the bitter drug, the disease-killer within. It is noteworthy that it is the drug inside, corresponding to the Lord, that effects the cure and not the sugar coating outside, which the Upasanas (Upayantaras) are Whereas the drug, taken as it is, without any coating, will hasten the cure, the round-about method of conveying the drug through any other medium will inevitably delay the result. This comparison holds good between surrender to the Lord as the sole Means and the pursuit of other 'Means'.

Aph : 129-133 :—The mother has a tender solicitude for all her offsprings, the handicapped like the blind, the deaf, the hunchback, midgets etc., as well as the non-handicapped. So also, the Scriptures cater to the needs of the entire range of the Subjects, swayed by the triple characteristics of 'satva", 'rajas' and 'tamas'—(Thrygunya vishaya vedah)—with an eye on their ultimate salvation. Faith in the Scriptures is inculcated in the 'tamasic' or deluded Subjects, groping in the darkness of ignorance, by giving them prescriptions for achieving material well-being, such as the performance of 'Syena Yaga', for annihilating one's enemies. The erstwhile unbeliever has the requisite proof of the efficiency of the Scriptures, when the intended result is achieved. Once he becomes inclined to believe in the doctrines of the Scriptures, he is being taken on to the higher planes, by stages, till he is put on to the highest goal, in the best possible manner. And the 'Rajasic', predominantly influenced by the characteristic trait known as 'Rajas', is made to resort to 'Kareereeshti yaga' for the material benefit of getting rain, while the 'Satvic' soul is put on the path of 'Upasana' or reflection and meditation, 'atma va arey dhrashtavyah ....' And to the still more evolved, the 'parama satvic', the path of loving surrender to God, as the sole Means, 'Prapatti' is unfolded- "Mumukshur vy saranamaham prapadhye". Only the last-mentioned accords with the essential

nature of the individual soul, namely, exclusive dependence on the Lord and that is why the 'Upasana', entailing self-effort by way of reflection, meditation etc., prescribed for the 'Satvic' is not applicable to the 'Parama Satvic'. The gradations, indicated above, help to sort out things and put them in their proper perspective. It will be seen that the Scriptures have, besides a patronising attitude, a cosmopolitan outlook, bringing within their folds, the entire range of the Subjects, each one getting a prescription according to his or her taste and evolution, which is easily assimilable and hence practicable. So then, what is applicable to persons in the lower stages is not applicable to those in the higher stages. In the lowest stages, the methods prescribed are by way of inculcating faith in the Shastras while the highest stage of 'Prapatti' highlights one's faith in one's own essential nature, namely, exclusive dependence on the Lord.

And now, speaking about gradations, although the norms applicable in the lower strata will not hold good in the higher ones, a doubt might arise whether the 'upasanas', prescribed for the 'Satvic', as means for attaining 'Moksha', have not got a superior stature of their own, being on a much higher footing then the occult exercises like 'Syena Yaga', directed towards the annihilation of one's enemies. Actually, it is the other way round. No doubt, the occult exercise in question carries with it, an element of oppression of others. It is, however, the activity of an individual soul, who doesn't see beyond his nose and, therefore, mistakes the body for the soul. The act and the result thereof are, therefore, only skin-deep, just superficial. On the other hand, the 'Upasanas' are resorted to by an Individual, who knows that he is different from his body and yet indulges in self-effort, which is destructive of the essential nature of his soul. Hence, the 'upasana' is far more injurious than the case cited earlier, the injury going deep down, right into the inner core of his being. The upasana is not pleasurable either, involving, as it does, bodily exercise to an exacting degree. Thus the 'Upayantaras' (resort to means other than the Lord) bristle with blemishes, as set out above, which may be summed up as: destructive of the essential nature of the soul, breeds dread, dismay and dejection, mortification (bodily suffering due to severities and penance) and incompatibility of the means employed and the end in view.

Aph : 134-139 : 'Prapatti', on the other hand, is above faults of any kind and the only blemish, if at all one can be imported, is that it could also lend itself, rather superficially, to the fallacy of being deemed as a 'Means' for attaining the Lord, which, in fact, it is not. This fallacy, which is but the result of superficial thinking, can be easily brushed aside, Vide aphorisms 54 to 59 ante. The utter blemishlessness of 'Prapatti', in dire contrast with the 'upayantaras', is due to the fact that the former

springs from the basic knowledge of the true or essential nature of the individual soul, namely, its exclusive dependence on the Lord and thus, totally freed from the involvement of self-effort (Bhagvat Pravritti virodhi swapravritti nivrittiprapatti), it is absolutely easy and effortless. Vide Thiruvoimozhi IX-1-7.

Granting that no effort is needed on the part of the 'Prapanna', does it not behove him to make some offering to the Lord, a token gift at least, to please Him ? Well, there is no gift or offering to think of, appropriate to the Lord's colossal stature Here then is the 'Prapanna', neither making any effort of his own nor presenting any token of his love to God. What is it that can induce the pleasure of the Supreme Lord, attracting Him to such an Individual ? The mere fact that the Individual, who had, for ages, been straying away from God, has now turned towards Him and also submitted himself to His protection, makes God feel highly jubilant. Perfect in all respects and, therefore, above all wants, that the Lord is, there is no question of His looking for any gift from the Subject. On the other hand, the radical change in the Subject's erstwhile attitude, which has now turned him God-ward, is quite enough for Him to greedily pounce upon the Subject and salve him, seizing the long-looked-for opportunity. Alternatively, the perfection of the Lord puts the Subject at ease and makes him grab at Him. With His affluence galore, the Lord is above petty considerations of the extent of offerings made by the Subjects and would not, therefore, differentiate them on this count. Did not Lord Krishna say, 'patram pushpam palam thoyam yo may bhaktya prayaschati, tadaham bhaktyupahritam asnami prayatatmanah" ? 'Whoever offers Me, in faith and love, leaf, flower, fruit or water, that offering I accept, lovingly made with pious will.' Things easy of procurement, offered, not for expiation of sins or securing other ends but considering giving to Him, as an end in itself, out of sheer inability to exist without making the offering, are gladly accepted by HIM. It is not the gift itself that matters but the love behind it. If the devotee is unable to offer anything better, the Lord would consume with great avidity, like a famished fellow, even leaves and flowers, which do not fall under the normal category of "edibles".

On hearing that Sri Krishna would be visiting Hastinapur shortly, as an emissary of the Pandavas, King Dhritarashtra did some loud thinking, as follows: "Krishna, the partisan of the Pandavas, will be going over here shortly to mediate on their behalf. Let us try to square him up by givnig him land and gold." The pious Sanjaya, however, cut to size the hapless old king and disabused him of his wrong notions about Krishna, by saying: "All that Krishna would need, and care for, is the simple courtesy, normally extended to an ordinary sojourner, namely, cool water for washing

his weary feet and kind words of enquiry. Anything else, you might like to offer him, should be out of an innate love for him and not by way of winning him over-in the latter case, he would just spurn it all."

Nammazhvar also stresses, in Thiruvoimozhi I-6-1, that the Lord is easily worshipped with just water, flower and incense. Any flower could be offered and any incense burnt. As God hates hypocricy and estimates the sincerity of the devotee, no flower is taboo and in the name of burning incense, as part of worship, even a heap of garbage could be burnt and smoke raised therefrom.

Aph : 140-141 :--The disparity or incompatibility of the 'Means' and the 'End' was listed out as one of the many flaws to which 'Upayantara anushtana' (resort to means other than the Lord) is exposed. And here, in the case of 'prapatti', there is absolutely no such disparity between the 'Means' and the 'End', as they are coincidental. It is like beckoning a cow by a mere show of the hand, holding a few blades of grass, and feeding it with grass when it comes near. The Lord, who was instrumental in weaning away the Subject from sensual pleasures by beaming forth His auspicious traits and enthralling beauty, also becomes the object of enjoyment in the final state of fruition. It is obeisance, before and after, and is thus fraught with felicity throughout.

Aph : 142-145 :-Self-surrender or submission to the Lord's protection does not constitute, by itself, the 'Means' to secure Him. It only means that the Subject has got the better of the perversity of his free-will and has ceased to hamper the operation of God's Grace. It is His will that prevails like unto the owner getting hold of his property. If, on the other hand, the Subject thinks that attainment of God is his (Subject's) personal gain and seeks to get hold of Him (swagatha sveekara), it is a movement in the reverse gear, which will misfire, despite all the merit claimed for 'prapatti', in the preceding aphorisms. When the Individual loses the correct perspective and resorts to 'prapatti' with such a personal sense of importance and involvement, it will be of no avail. On the other hand, the logical consequence flowing from the fundamental relationship of 'Swami' owner)—'swum' (property), subsisting between God and His Subjects, is that, when it is a case of 'paragata-sveekara', that is, the Lord (owner) seeking the hand of 'Man' (reclaiming His property), even the latter's massive sins will be no impediment. This position is brought out by the following text.—

"Chithah parama chillabhe
prapattirapi nopadih,
viparyaye thu nyvasya
prathishedhaya pathakam".

These two postures of "Swagata Sweekara" (the Individual trying to get hold of the Lord) and "paragata-sveekara" (the descent of the Lord's unconditional grace on the Individual, at His volition) are best illustrated by the examples of Bharata the younger brother of Sri Rama and Guha, the hunter. Bharata ardently sought out Sri Rama in the forest, with an aching mind, and performed Saranagathi at the latter's feet, imploring him to get back to Ayodhya and assume the reins of the Kingdom. But Sri Rama had different ideas and would not oblige Bharata although the latter's devotion was unquestionably of a very high order and his intentions exceedingly good. Bharata's 'prapatti' proved unaviling, despite the purity of his intentions, because it is the Lord's will which matters, in the final analysis, and, in this case, Rama's thoughts did not coincide with Bharata's trend of thinking. On the other hand, Guha, the hunter, was voluntarily courted by Sri Rama, and they became bosom friends, their terrible disparity not withstanding. Actually, punhya (merit) and papa (demerit) are not absolute but relative to the Lord's pleasure and displeasure respectively. In other words, that which pleases the Lord is 'punhya' while that which is unpalatable to Him is 'papa'. (Yat tvatpriyam tadhiha punhyamapunhyam anyat).

Aph. 146-147 : The evil of 'Swagata sweekara', or the Individual trying to gain the Lord, is further pin-pointed, as follows :

Apart from 'prapatti', performed by the Individual, becoming infructuous, when not in consonance with the Lord's own inclination, it becomes a veritable transgression too. 'Prapatti', which is a prayaschitta or atonement for all kinds of sins, itself becomes a sin, under such circumstances. In his swan-song-'Saranagati-gadyam', Sri Ramanuja implored the Lord to redeem him from all sins, considering His relationship to the supplicant, as Father, Mother and all Benefactors rolled into one, and begged of Him, in particular, to forgive his cheekiness and audacity in seeking the Lord's forgiveness despite his massive sins. The prapanna, belonging to the school of 'swagata sweekara', stands in the plight of a woman, who had strayed away from her husband, long years, coming to him, one day, without any qualms or compunctions or fear of punishment for all her well-known, past transgressions and asking him to take her back.

Aph. 148-150 : Although one of the traits of the Lord is His unbridled independence, yet He longs to serve His devotees and be dominated by them. Such dependence on devotees can arise from two causes, namely, the Lord's compassion for those who seek refuge in Him or His own free will, whereby He sheds His Grace spontaneously on the Subjects of His choice, whether deserving or not. The superiority of the latter can be

guaged from the fact that the former could get nullified when the attribute of independence (Swatantrya) predominates. Dependence of the latter variety stemming from the Lords independcnce, however, goes on uninterrupted, with no counteracting influence or factor. This meaning finds favour with the Veda Purusha, the same text occuring in two upanishads, namely, kadopanishad and Mundakopanishad. The relevant text runs as "Nayamatma pravachanenalabhyo na medhaya na bahuna sruthena, yamevaisha vrunuthe thena labhyas thasyaisha atma vivrunuthe thanoom swom." This means that the Paramatma (Lord) is not attainable by the Atma (individual soul) through mere meditation and deep learning; on the other hand, He reveals Himself, in all His splendour, to the Subject of His choice. Did not Sri Rama court, on his own, Guha and Hanuman on the banks of the rivers Ganga and Pampa, respectively, and shower on them his grace, unsolicited, rather not caring for their solicitude — (apeksha nirapeksha) ?

Aph. 151-155 : The indispensability of Sri Mahalakshmi's presence by the side of the Lord, at the time of supplication by the individual soul, has been dealt with already, in extenso, vide aphorisms 23-25 ante. Even in the reverse process of the Lord shedding His voluntary Grace, as in the case of Guha and Hanuman, cited above, the instrumentality of Mahalakshmi is necessary and sought by Him. Sri Rama befriended Guha in the immediate presence of Sita while Hanuman was sought by Rama through Lakshmana. Later on, when Vibhishana cut himself adrift from the woe-begone Ravana's Lanka and sought asylum in Rama's camp, Rama wanted Sugriva, the monkey-king to conduct Vibhishana in. Although Sita's physical proximity was not available at the time of admission of Hanuman and Vibhishana, her part in regard to their admission can be appreciated, if we delved a little into the great epic. While being carried away by Ravana, air-borne Sita tied up her jewels and threw them down, right in front of the place where Sugreeva and Hanuman were standing and these jewels were later shown by them to Rama and identified by him as Sita's. The association of Sugriva and Hanuman with Sita is thus established. After reaching Lanka, Sita shed her grace on Vibhishana, prompting him to get into Rama's Camp. The instrumentality of Sita in regard to the admission of all the three, namely, Guha, Hanuman and Vibhishana is thus quite clear.

Well, what is the necessity for an intermediary, at all, seeing that the Individual is the eternal servant of God, even as God is the eternal Master of all the individual souls, not conditioned by any cause or circumstance (nirupadhika) ? The Individual who has been steeped in age-long transgressions, in utter defiance of the Lord's mandates and injunctions, is naturally diffident, at the time of his eventual submission to the Lord, of facing squarely an irate Master whose unerring eye misses none of the former's

innumerable sins, and, therefore, badly needs a sop or shock-absorber, in between, to temper the Divine Justice with Mercy. But then, why is the Lord also in a similar plight, needing the same intermediary, even when He sheds His voluntary Grace on the Subject of His choice ? If the individual soul was trembling with an overwhelming sense of guilt and was afraid of facing the Lord, the latter is also bogged down by a sense of guilt. The Lord's sense of guilt is traceable to His having ruthlessly kept the Individual at an enormous distance, all along, thinking only about his transgressions and completely overlooking their basic relationship, the inalienable bonds subsisting between them. And now, when He courts the Individual, at long last, He is afraid that the latter, scared of the unrelenting tyrant of a Master, might run away and elude His grasping hand, and hence, His need for the intermediary.

The instrumentality of the mediatrix also helps to stabilise the essential nature of both the Jiva and the Lord, the former's dependence on the Lord's devotees (Bhagavata paratantrya) and the Lord's own dependence on His devotees (asrita paratantrya). The dependence of the Individual on the Lord's devotees springs from the consideration that they are devoted to the Lord and yet, it is also eternal inasmuch as the ground for such dependence, namely, the Individual's love of God, whom the devotees also love, is eternal. Likewise, the dependence of the Lord on the devotees arises from the consideration that they love Him but, at the same time, this love is eternal, as the bonds of love between Him and His Subjects are eternal.

Yet another benefit accruing from the 'Purushakara' in question, (the instrumentality of Mahalakshmi), is that both the Lord and the Individual get released from the ephemeral bonds of Karma. The Individual's bonds of Karma, keeping him bound down to a long travail of suffering through innumerable births, are too-well-known to need any elaboration here. The Lord is also, in a sense, bound by the Karma (deeds) of the Individual in that He has the juridical responsibility to secure the ends of shastraic justice in the light of the Karma of the individual soul. The bonds are demolished on both sides through the mediation of Mahalakshmi, in her recommendatory role. vide also aphorism 12 ante.

Aph : 156·159 :—Having reached a stage, as above, is there any possibility of the individual soul trying to unsettle the 'Protector-Ward' relationship subsisting between him and the Lord and slip back to his old ways or of the Lord loosening His grip on the reclaimed Individual, thereby reviving the cyclic operation of the latter's bonds of Karma, as of old ? No, such a thing can not happen, because both have the basic knowledge of their inalienable relationship, whereby the Lord, as the Super-abundant

Benefactor, at one end, has the inescapable obligation of extending His loving hand and caressing the feeble Individual, at the other. Further, their get-together has been solemnised in the august presence of Sri Mahalakshmi, the Grand witness to the spiritual union of the individual soul and the Super Soul and so, neither the Lord nor the Subject can annul it. Thiruvoimozhi I-7-8, read in conjunction with X-10-7, ibid, elucidates this position. In the earlier stanza, Nammazhvar avers that he can't be given up even by the omnipotent Lord, after He had once accepted him in the presence of the Divine Mother and the Eternal Heroes (Nitya soories). In the latter stanza, he says that there is no question of his giving up the Lord, Who, out of His boundless love for Sri Mahalakshmi and the latter's attachment to Nammazhvar, befriended him and mixed with him freely.

Oh, what a commanding position for the Grand witness, Mahalakshmi (Sreeh)! The word 'Sreeh' having its root in 'Sreeng-Sevayam' lends itself to four different classes of construction and according to the Karmani class of construction, we get at 'Sreeyathe ithi sreeh' or one, who is sought after. She is sought after by the individual souls by virtue of their essential nature, as sole servitors of the Divine couple, and by the Lord, a qualitative approach, as His beloved spouse. The instrumentility of such an exalted Mahalakshmi is indispensable for all the three categories of 'prapannas', elaborated in aphorisms 152-157.

Aph : 160-168 : When, in the blissful state of union, an ecstatic Lord deigns to reverse the order and seeks delight by serving the Subject, the latter should not shrink back and hamper the Lord's enjoyment. If, at that stage, the Subject seeks to do himself good by preserving, in tact, his essential nature as the Lord's servant and prevents the Lord from having it all, His own way, it is really no good but is despicable like evil. Service unto the Lord (Seshatva), no doubt, adorns the individual soul, being in keeping with his essential nature. And yet, it should adapt itself to the needs of the situation, as above. The blouse worn by the lady is decorative and pleasing to the husband and yet it has to be given up when it detracts from the pleasure of their embrace. Typical of the conjugal bliss, enjoyed by Sri Rama and Sita, it is said that she would not keep, on her person, even a single chain or necklace, when in her Lord's bed-chamber, lest it should prove detrimental to their embrace 'haropi narppithah kante sparsa samrodha beerunha.................'

Even as Seshatva (servanthood) has to be kept suppressed, if it hampers the Lord's pleasure, the other attribute, namely, 'Paratantrya' (dependence) should not also be allowed to damp the Lord's spirits; if the

Subject was unresponsive and behaved like a mere chip of wood, in the name of dependence, it would certainly detract from the Lord's pleasure and thus become an evil, although, by itself, in the normal context, 'Paratantrya' adorns the Subject, being the very antithesis of conceit and arrogance, which are despicable. And again, the Subject should give up his stubborn insistence on getting rid of this material body with all its drawbacks, seeing that it is the Lord's will to keep him on, in this physical frame, a little longer. Well, what is the Lord's fascination for this elemental body which the Gnostics (Gnanis) have no hesitation in condemning as foul and are ready to give up, any moment ? Will not its native brilliance and purity, shorn of the material cloak of a body, enhance the Lord's enjoyment ? No, the Lord's delight in the material body of the Subject, resulting in his retention in this body even after reclamation by the Lord, stems from the fact that it was in this body, out of the numberless bodies assumed by the Subject, that the Lord could get him, at long last, and the sweet aroma of spiritual awakening emanating therefrom is so very pleasing to the Lord The Lord's enchantment for this material body, made up of the five elements, gut and glands, blood and bones, nerve and muscles, with all its dirt and stench, can be likened to the lover doting on the body of his beloved, with all its drawbacks, while not suffering the presence of jewels on her body for fear of their interfering with his enjoyment. The jewels, known for their decorative value, are relegated to the background while that, which is ordinarily despicable, acquires a special glamour in the eyes of the lover. After the overthrow of Ravana, Sri Rama sent for Sita, whom he very much liked to see straight from her captivity, in the very state of her internment. When, however, Sita presented herself after a refreshing bath, Sri Rama literally frowned on her 'Snanam rosha janakam'. In Thiruvoimozhi X-7-1 and X-7-10, the dialogue between Nammazhvar and the Lord throws light on the Lord's extraordinary eagerness to take the Azhvar bodily to Heavens, and the latter successfully arguing the case for discarding the Prakritic (material) body, right here. This incidentally reveals that the Lord covets the gnani, along with his physical form and adores him in that mortal frame, even as ladies wear, on their locks, the fragrant root, dug out of the earth, without shaking off the earthen particles of dust, lest it should diminish the fragrance.

Aph. 169-174 : It is merely because of the Lord's extra-ordinary love for the physical frame, as well, of the Gnani, that he is kept on, in this abode, despite his terrible yearning to give it up and attain the feet of the Lord on the yonder side of heaven, finding expressions such as those in Thiruvoimozhi III-2-1 and VI-9-9. There is no question of the Subject staying on, in this abode, enjoying the fruits of his Karma, even after his

deliverance therefrom by the Lord, who said "Sarva papebhyo mokshayishyami". As a matter of fact, the Lord's attachment to the Gnani's physical form even surpasses His love for the pilgrim centres where He has condescended to shed His Grace on the votaries in His Arccha form. This is quite understandable, seeing that the very purpose of His manifestation in Arccha form is only to get hold of His Subjects, by some means or the other. And when He gets His catch all right, and it is a big haul at that, His gratification knows no bounds. The Lord's stay in the pilgrim centres is thus not an end in itself but only a means for reclamation of His subjects, His ultimate destination being the heart-centre of the spiritually regenerated Subjects. Once the destination is reached, the means employed for reaching it get relegated to a place of secondary importance. It is then the turn of a devotee like Pey Azhvar to request the Lord not to relax His interest in the pilgrim centres, which operate as the springboard whence the Lord could reach His devotees, His ultimate destination. It is now a case of the Lord loving the pilgrim centres, firstly, as places adored by His devotees and secondly, out of gratitude to those centres for helping Him to reclaim the Subjects, by turning them God-ward.

Aph. 175-180 : The Lord's pleasure (asrita vyamoham) being paramount, any attempt on the part of the Individual, by way of seeking good for himself, might prove an evil if he thereby inihibits or hampers the Lord's enjoyment. As already explained, the merit and demerit in the Individual are only relative to the Lord's pleasure and what is acclaimed usually, as merit, will be dubbed otherwise, if it came in the way of the Lord's enjoyment. An erotic lover takes delight in courting his lady-love, as he finds her, and brooks no delay but she keeps him off, in the name of cleansing herself and applying cosmetics etc., thinking that she could thereby make their union more pleasurable. The lover, in his present state of mind, can hardly appreciate such delay even though the intention of the lady is good from her own point of view. As Sri Pillan would put it, welfare achieved through one's own effort is attenuated and, therefore, less nourishing like the vendor's milk while the welfare bestowed by the Lord is as nourishing as the mother's breast milk. Trying to ensure one's own welfare, instead of leaving it as the Lord's business, is akin to snatching a suckling from its parents and handing it over to a butcher who will have no hesitation in selling the infant's flesh along with mutton. But then, how can it be said that the Individual seeks his own destruction, by indulging in self-protection ? Well, it is so; the Lord, who is always on the look-out for redeeming him can never work out his destruction and it is only the Individual, who rushes to his doom through conceit, arrogance and the elusive sensual pleasures.

Aph : 181-189 :—Even as fire burns out and puts out of shape whatever comes in contact with it. egoism works havoc on the Individual and cuts at the root of his essential nature. That is why, in the Jithantha Sloka "na kama kalusham chittham .. ..", the Sage seeks nothing more than birth as a Vaishnava, wedded to the service of the Lord and His devotees. Surrounded by the Rakshasis, Sita, in her captivity, exclaimed that all else except Sri Rama was of no consequence to her, neither her very breath, nor the jewels nor all the wealth. Again, Sri Alavandar solemnly abjured whatever militated against service unto the Lord—'na dheham na pranan nacha sukham ....'. In Thiruvoimozhi II.9-1, Nammazhvar affirmed that all that he prayed for was that he be crowned with the Lord's lovely lotus feet and nothing else, not even his ascent to heaven. It will thus be seen that all these devotees have shown studied indifference to everything except service unto the Lord, completely shutting out the prenicious ego.

The other great nefarious enemy is the yearning of the Individual for sensual pleasures, the succumbing of the senses to the glamour of the material world around, with all its ramifications. It is no use drawing the line here, between (1) the prohibited pleasures, which fall under the category of moral delinquency, leading to hell and (2) permissible enjoyment, which does not offend the moral codes as such, and hence can not lead one to the gates of hell. The latter is, in fact, even worse than the former, in that the former is poison itself and is thus an avowed or unmixed evil while the latter is like food mixed with poison, that is, evil palmed off as the otherwise. Seeking sensual pleasures is like trying to quench one's thirst with the blaze of fire instead of water and seeking shelter from the gruelling heat of the Sun, in the dubious shade cast by the hood of an infuriated cobra. Single-minded devotion to the Lord, drinking deep of the nectarean qualities of the Lord, would make one just collapse at the mere sight of the detrimental sensuality. He is in the same predicament as a bird called 'Asunhama', which feels exhilarated by the sweet strains of music but gets killed outright by the impact of a harsh sound like that of a trumpet. Did not Nammazhvar voice forth, in Thiruvoimozhi VI-9-9, his serious apprehension of the Lord's attempt to finish him off by just bringing him, face to face, with the mischevous play of the five unruly senses ?

He who buries himself in sensual enjoyment, totally unaware of his soul and the hazards involved in such pursuit, is a veritable agnostic (nastika), a free lance, having no faith in the Shastras and hence not bound by them. On the other hand, if an 'astika', professing faith in the Shastras subscribing to their validity and sanctity, nevertheless freely commits trans-

gressions, he could be dubbed an 'astika-nastika'. He is certainly worse off than the nastika referred to above; the nastika could be brought round through proper instruction and made amenable to the Shastraic mandates in the shape of decrees and injunctions The astika-nastika doesn't have to be taught anything anew and there is, therefore, no question of his being brought round. The twin evils of conceit and sensual enjoyment are, in themselves, sufficient to destroy the essential nature of the individual soul and they can bring on complete devastation of the soul by further breeding enmity towards the Lord's devotees (Bhagavatas).

Aph. 190-193 : No doubt, there are quite a few persons, moving about ostentatiously, whose job it is to go on flouting and reviling the devotees, but those people are little better than a folded saree appearing to be in tact, even after it is burnt out, but which will fly off in a thousand bits, in different directions, the moment a wind blows. The great preceptor, Nanjeeyar, clarified that the Lord, who could destroy all evil forces by the mere strength of His will (Sankalpa), actually came down to Earth and performed Herculean tasks, such as engaging Himself in a duel with Hiranya, Ravana and others, simply because He could not tolerate the wrongs done by them to His devotees. The Lord, who bears inordinate love for His devotees, would not rest satisfied with the annihilation of their opponents merely by His sankalpa (will) but would like to encounter them in a combat, tear them off, inch by inch, and torture them to death. In Mahabharatha, the Lord warned the people that if they insulted or threw affront at His devotees, all the merit earned by them, by dint of their past deeds, will instantly be set at naught-'Ya preethir mayi samvritta madh bhaktheshu sadha asthuthe avamanakriya thesham samharatyakilam subham.'

Aph. 194-203 : Offence is being thrown at the Godly (Bhagavatas) in ever so many ways. One of these is to cry them down by reason of their having been born in a low caste. To think of these great souls, elevated unto God, in terms of their birth and parentage, is even more atrocious than thinking of the 'Areeha' or God's iconic manifestation in terms of the composition of the Idol. Scanning an Idol as to whether it is made of stone, wood, copper, iron, silver or gold would mean the very negation of the principle, of the Lord's gracious manifestation in any image (asrita dhravya), erected by the votaries, out of love and reverence. Well, it is even as cruel as the scrutiny of the reproductive organ of one's own mother. Such an offender receives instantaneous punishment by turning, there and then, into a karma Chandala, (as distinguished from a Chandala, by birth), as in the case of Trisanku, king of the Ikshvaku dynasty. When Trisanku sought the help of Sage Vasishta, the Royal Priest, to perform a yaga, which would

enable him to enter swarg, in his embodied form, the Sage flatly declined and the King's subsequent approach to the Rishi's sons was also repulsed in a like manner, the King turned wrathful and declared his intention to defect from them and seek the help of some other Guru. Enraged at the king's infidelity, the sons of the Rishi cursed him and lo! the King at once became a Chandala, his apparel turning blue and the sacred thread on his person becoming a mere leather strap. See also the Sloka of Brahmanda Purana, 'anacharan dhuracharan, gnatroon, Heenajanmanah matbhaktan srotriyo nindhan sadhyah chandalatam vrajet' Unlike the Chandala, by birth, who has hopes of salvation either in the same span of life or a few spans after, there is no hope of redemption for the Karma Chandala, because he got himself hurled down from his erstwhile position of eminence to the bottommost depths of depravity (arooda pathitha). No one is excluded or exempted, as being above punishment for such an offence. Whosoever gives affront to the devotees (Bhagavatas), be he of the highest caste or the lowest, intellectually advanced or deficient, meets with the punishment, as above. Stanza 43 of Thondaradippodi Azhvar's Thirumaalai reads as follows:—

Oh Lord at Arangam ! even brahmins in the top caste,
Learned in all the four Vedas and their six adjuncts,
Will, it seems, become, in a trice, outcastes,
Should they decry Your devotees in the low caste.

After finishing a course of instructions under Sage Viswamitra, a brahmin, named, Galava requested the Preceptor to specify what he would like to have by way of 'Guru dhakshina' (fee). But the preceptor thought differently and cut the disciple short, saying that it was in appreciation of his service and devotion that all that knowledge was imparted to him and there was, therefore, no question of payment of fee. the disciple, however, firmly believed that payment of fee to the preceptor was an inescapable obligation and all that learning could remain stable and in tact only when he discharged the obligation. And so, he pressed the teacher, ad nauseum, and the latter, in sheer exasperation, demanded eight hundred snow-white horses, one ear of each horse, however, remaing green. In utter dismay, poor Galava had now no option but to beg of Lord Mahavishnu to come to his rescue. And there stood before him, the mighty Garuda, who had already once come to his aid. Garuda agreed to take Galava on his back and fly all over, high and low, far and wide, in search of horses of such queer description. In the course of their wanderings, they rested a while on Mount Rishaba, after receiving the hospitality of 'Sandilya', a resident of that place and

a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. Pleased with her hospitality, Garuda pondered within himself why such an exalted devotee should remain in that God-forsaken spot and even decided to take her on to a pilgrim centre. But then, before he and his desperate Companion could resume their onward flight, all the plumes of Garuda fell off from his body and he just couldn't fly again. Galava elicited from Garuda how the latter had thought low of the dwelling place of Sandilya, the great devotee, and was intending to shift her to a pilgrim centre. Garuda begged her pardon for this transgression, and, with her blessings, got back his plumage and the strength to fly again, (Mahabharata-Udyoga parva-Chapter 112)

Pillaipillai Azhwan, a disciple of Sri Koorathazhvan, though of good descent, great erudition and learning, was found to be arrogant and aggressive, throwing offence at the Bhagavatas (devotees). Koorathazhvan, well Known for his tender solicitude, realised the abysmal depth into which tne disciple was fast getting himself buried, despite his vast learning, and hit upon a plan to retrieve him. On an auspicious day, when gifts were offered for expiation of one's sins, Koorathazhvan approached the disciple in question, just after the latter had finished his bath and demanded of him an oblation. The startled disciple said that there was nothing, he could offer to the Great Master and yet, the latter insisted that the former should resolve, over a handful of water thrown into the river, that he would thenceforward desist from offending the Bhagavatas, by word, deed or thought. There was immediate compliance from the disciple. But then, by sheer force of habit, sometime later on, the disciple thought ill of a devotee and at once realised that he had thereby broken the pledge given to the Master and was thus damned beyond redemption. So deep and intense was his feeling of repentence and sense of shame that he dared not appear before the Master. The compassionate Master could not, however, brook separation from his disciple, sought him out and sized up the position. Addressing the disciple. the Master said:

"I am exceedingly happy to take note of your deep and sincere repentence for the mere entertainment of an evil thought, even before it could manifest itself in word and deed. You take it from me that the Lord will also be immensely pleased and forgive you. I am sure, You will desist from inflicting bodily injury on devotees, for fear of punishment at the hands of the King. And now, what remains is only offence thrown out by word of mouth and it will suffice if you put an effective curb on it."

Aph: 204-206 : Contact with the Godly is enough to lead one to salvation, despite the deficiency or even total absence of spiritual learning and religious observances. Conversely, offence given to the devotees is enough to throw one into perdition, his vast erudition and meticulous religious observances notwithstanding. In the former case, it is not as if the contact in question has to be only with devotees, born in the higher castes, having to their credit meticulous religious observances, while contact with devotees of lower descent will be of no avail. Again, it is not as if offence thrown at the devotees belonging to the higher castes will alone prove ruinous while there is no harm in offending devotees of lower descent. Well, so far as the 'Man of God' is concerned, there is absolutely no distinction of high and low, by reason of descent, learning and conduct. Contact with such a one, irrespective of his caste, attainments etc, will elevate us while the wrong done to him will completely ruin us.

The episode of Nampaduvan, the Harijan bard, in Kaisika purana, reveals how a low-born devotee could bring about the salvation of a degenerate brahmin, leading the miserable life of a ghost eating human flesh. There is also the story of Uparicharavasu, the mighty king, gifted with the capacity to move in space with his entire retinue. When there was a wrangling between the Devas and the Rishis in regard to the procedure to be followed for a particular Yaga, both the parties called upon the great King to arbitrate and give an impartial verdict. The King was, however, found guilty of partiality to the Devas, inviting the wrath and curse of the Rishis. The King lost his special power of moving in space and literally met with a great fall.

Aph: 207-217 : Let it not be misunderstood, at this stage, that brahminism is being denied the position of eminence accorded to it by the Shastras. The point emphasised, in the present context, is that brahminism should be guarded against abuse such as wrongs done to devotees, which will demolish its entirc edifice. Brahminism, which aids a proper appreciation of the great glory of God, through the study of the Vedas, and helps to attain the Lord, will be self-defeating, if it breeds conceit and engenders animosity towards the Lord's devotees. If even eminence of birth and religious observances fail to secure salvation, what are the chances of those in the lower strata ? Well, we have it on record, that persons in the higher as well as the lower strata have gained salvation, and it only proves that neither birth nor observances can, by themselves, be responsible for gaining salvation or losing it. What really matters is contact with the Godly.

And now, the question is posed whether there could be parity among the devotees, without caste distinctions, by virtue of all of them being the Lord's devotees. Looking at it merely from the surface, it would seem that persons born in the higher castes have an edge over those born in the lower castes. But then, the whole outlook is terribly confused and the classification and differentiation, arising from such an outlook, are equally confused. The eminence or greatness of one's birth is not to be guaged from the caste in which one was born but from the extent to which it helps adherence to the essential nature of 'Seshatva' (servanthood), Actually, a devotee, born in a high caste, is liable to feel self-conscious and super-eminent by reason of his caste and environment and be led astray into the domain of 'Upayantara'. Chances are that humility, which alone is the hallmark of excellence, is not ingrained in him, situated as he is, and, if at all, it has to be studiously cultivated as an artificial virtue, as distinguished from an in-born, natural trait. On the other hand, the devotee, born in the lower caste, stands a very good chance of being humble, right from birth, not being exposed to any of the aforesaid dangers which beset the devotees, born in the higher castes. Real eminence, therefore, goes in the reverse order and rightly belongs to the devotees in the lower castes with humility ingrained in them, right from birth. It is said that, however low be his parentage, the devotee is superior to the Brahmin, nay, even a Sanyasi, if the latter is devoid of love to God. In fact, he, who is devoid of love to God, is even worse than a 'Swapachah', the Chandala, who eats the putrid flesh of a dog 'Swapachopi maheepala Vishnu bhaktho dwijathikah· Vishnu bhakti heenasthu yadhischa swapachatamah.'

Aph : 218-226 · Thus far, it was elucidated how one's birth is to be adjudged high or low. Contact with enlightened Sri Vaishnavas, free from conceit of any kind and steeped in God-love, can, however, help to wipe off the drawbacks of low birth. A precondition for the establishment of such a contact is a spirit of 'Give and take', and the total elimination of conceit due to one's exalted birth etc. See also stanza 42 of Thondaradippodi Azhwar's Thirumaalai, which reads as ;—

> My Lord in the walled city of Arangam ! You have, it seems
> Ordained the brahmins. well-versed in Vedas, in their flawless
> Line of descent, to revere on a par with You, Your devotees
> Born in low castes, and with them mix in a spirit of 'give and take'

Just as the herbally treated gold in the hands of an alchemist can, by a mere touch, transmute even base metal into gold, association with the soft and saintly Sri Vaishnavas transforms into their own virtue, those coming in contact with them, the latter's draw- backs of low birth etc., vanishing automatically.

The persons seeking association with such benefactors have to revere them on a par with the Acharya (Preceptor) and should look upon them as much superior to themselves and even God. The preceptor's own directive, that the Srivaishnavas should be revered on a par with him is the authority for this, Failure to hold them in reverence, in this manner, will be an offence like decrying them by reason of their birth and parentage. This position has been clearly brought out in the Itihasas and Puranas, as well as Nammazhvar's Thiruvoimzohi III-7, VIII-10, Thirumangai Azhvar's Peria Thirumozhi II-1, and stanzas 39-43 of Thondaradippodi Azhvar's Thirumaalai.

Aph : 227-234 : A doubt might arise at this stage in regard to the criteria, now enunciated for determining whether one's birth is high ot low, brushing aside the physical fact of one's birth in a high or low caste. It might be construed as a mere argument to stress the over-riding importance of devotion and questioned how a person born in a low caste could rise to a position of eminence in that very body, ignoring his parentage. The following illustrations are cited by way of resolving this doubt:

Sage Viswamitra, born as a Kshatrya, got himself elevated to the stature of a Brahma Rishi, through severe penance and austerity, and acknowledged, as such, by no less than Sage Vasishta;

Vibhishana, dubbed by Ravana as a traitor and turned out by him, was acclaimed by Sri Rama as one belonging to his own Ikshvaku clan c. f. "akyahi mama tatvena Rakshasanam balabalam" "Oh Vibhishana ! please tell us about the strength and disposition of the 'Rakshasas' making it abundantly clear that Sri Rama did not view Vibhishana as a Rakshasa. It is noteworthy how the worldlings like Ravana gave up Vibhishana whom Sri Rama literally pounced upon with great avidity;

Sri Rama performed the funeral rites of Jatayu, the vulture King, with all the solemnity due to persons of great rank and learning (Brahma meda samskara). When Dharmaputra hesitated to perform similar rites for Vidhura, a person of great learning, but born a Sudra, there came a directive from the Heavens (asareeri) dispelling Dharmaputra's doubts regarding Vidhura's eligibility for such obsequial rites. Thereupon, Vidhura, a Sudra by birth, was given Brahma meda samskara;

Even Rishis sought clarification of the abstruse points in 'Dharma Shastra' from a mere meat-vendor, known as Dharma Vyadha;

When Sri Krishna went as the emissary of the Pandavas to Dhritharashtra's court, he ate at Vidhura's house, instead of taking food from Bhishma, Dhrona etc., of exalted birth;

Sri Rama ate with relish, the fruits offered by Sabhari of low caste-fruits partly bitten by her already, by way of sampling the good ones, fit for his consumption;

Maraneri Nambi, a disciple of Sri Alavandar (Saint Yamunacharya) was a man of great learning and devotion, though born in a low caste. When his end was nearing, he felt that his body, looked upon with a good deal of affection by that Great Preceptor, had a special sanctity and should not, therefore, be handled by his kinsmen, on his death. He, therefore, made a special request to Sri Peria Nambi (Sri Alavandar's disciple and next to him in the apostolic succession) to guard against this danger. On his passing away, Peria Nambi accordingly cremated the body himself and also performed the funeral rites. When asked by Sri Ramanuja as to why Peria Nambi did not stay within the four corners of the Shastras and get the cremation and funeral rites of the low-caste Maraneri Nambi done by someone else, instead of his doing it himself, giving the public a wrong impression about him, Peria Nambi clarified the position. The great Acharya pointed out that :

(1) It was not a matter where any one else could deputise for him even as one can not perform Sandyavandana, by proxy;

(2) he was by no-means superior to Sri Rama who performed the funeral rites of Jatayu, the vulture, nor was Maraneri Nambi inferior to Jatayu and

(3) Nammazhvar's hymns stressing the glory of service unto the Lord's devotees (Thiruvoimozhi III-7 and VIII-10) were not of mere academic value but meant to be followed by us all, at least to some extent.

Aph. 235-238 : During His incarnations (Pradhur bhavaih), the Lord assumes different forms, from time to time, now as a Deva, then as a human, and so on, suiting the purpose of His avatar, and mixes freely with the respective species, as one among them. Likewise, His devotees appear in different forms and in different castes. This is by no means derogatory to them while, on the other hand, it only enhances their glory, as universal welfare is their sole objective. Real glory vests only in the devotees; the so-called eminence due to wealth, learning, religious observances etc., of the non-devotees is no better than bedecking a widow. It may be asked whether all that learning etc., of a non-devotee will be of no avail and go a waste. Yes, a Brahmin, who has mastered all the four Vedas but is devoid of love for Vasudeva, the Supreme Lord, carries all that learning, on his vain shoulders like an ass carrying its burden-he is, what is known as (Brahmana gardhabaha). While top men, bereft of devotion

to God, are condemned, in this manner, it will be instructive to note how saintly persons go to the extent of coveting the lives of beasts and birds and even stationary things like trees aud mountains because of the latter's intimate association with the Lord and His devotees. Sri Kulasekara Azhvar, the Chera King, wished to exchange places not only with the fiora and fauna, abounding in holy Thiruvengadam but also the pathway, brooks and hillocks and the very foot-step in the Sanctum. Both Periazhvar, a high-class Brahmin, backed up by sound learning and his foster-daughter, Andal, had no hesitation in transposing themselves as Yadhavas, the community in which Lord Krishna was born, out of their boundless love for that Avatar.

Aph. 239-240 : It may be stated here, in passing, that there need be no apprehension whether, on account of such a mental stance on the part of these devotees, their essential nature (swaroopa) might undergo any modification. Actually, when the soul's unwholesome acquisitions, namely, conceit, arrogance etc., are completely eradicated, like the discarding of rags, the essential nature will shine, in its native brilliance, and the Individual could become a 'Nareenham utthami', (the gem of a woman), on a par with Sri Mahalakshmi, deserving the hand of the Supreme Lord (Purushottama) There is no exaggeration or hyperbole in claiming parity with Sri Mahalakshmi, as such parity is assured for the individual soul, attaining purity on six counts, such as exclusive service unto the Lord (anayarha seshatva), sole dependence on Him (ananya saranatva), absence of love for aught but Him (ananya bhogyatva) etc. In Thirumangai Azhvar's Peria Thirumozhi III-7-9, the Azhvar, depicted as a love-lorn young lady pining for the Supreme Lord, is referred to by her gnostic Mother, as being the equal of Sri Mahalakshmi.

Aph. 241-242 : It sounds paradoxical that Kulasekara Azhvar should have aspired for low positions, even as inanimate beings, while Sage Viswamitra worked his way up, in a spirit of challenge. The key to this riddle, however, lies in the fact that desire for tangible advancement in one's life, as in the case of Vishwamitra, is motivated by one's egocentric impulses. For the attainment of hidden purusharta, namely, the wealth and bliss of service unto the Lord, the movement is in the reverse order, that is, the progressive wearing out of the glamour of worldly stature and material possessions, leading to the lowest ebb of complete self-abnegation, the utter rout of egoism. A striking illustration of the failure of the highest to attain God, and the success of the lowly in attaining Him, is provided by the four-headed Brahma, known for his obsession as the Creator, and the simple milk-maid, named, Chintayanti (vide aphorism 80), totally bereft of egoism.

Aph. 243 : From aphorism 180 and onwards, the disastrous effects of conceit and sensuality have been analytically discussed. And now, Sri Lokacharya presents, in a concise view, the code of conduct to be followed by the well.informed 'Prapanna' to whom the Lord is at once the 'Means' and the 'End'-all-in-one.

He shall look upon his person with the aversion with which one looks at one's enemy, seeing that it is a hot- bed for conceit and sensuality, which are highly detrimental to his essential nature;

He shall dread like a serpent, the worldlings (Samsaris) because of their corrupting influence, fostering conceit and sensual enjoyment;

On the contrary, he shall derive all the happiness he could have, by the sight of his near relations, when he meets Sri Vaishnavas, who would rid him of the evil of conceit and worldly pleasures, through proper instructions;

The Deity shall be revered by him with all the awe and reverence, due to one's father, as the Lord is the Eternal Father, always having an eye on his welfare;

He shall court his preceptor wtth all that fondness with which a famished fellow takes to food, for it is the Acharya, who has turned him towards God, after sowing the seeds of knowledge, devotion to God and detachment from wordly pleasures;

He shall feel drawn unto his disciples, as if he meets his beloved ones;

He shall shun conceit, Riches and sexuality (lust) and studiously eschew them for the following reasons:

Conceit, because of its potentiality for offending the pious Sri Vaishnavas;

Riches, as they will tend to foster ruinous contacts with the worldlings; and

Sexuality, as it will engender a stupid craze for persons, even when forcibly turned out by them;

In him shall be implanted firm faith in the Preceptor's Grace for the induction into him of the soulful qualities of 'Sama' (i. e.) restraining the mind and other internal organs and 'Dhama' (i. e.) controlling the outter sense-organs and actions etc., seeing that these qualities can not be acquired through his own efforts or those of others, situated like him;

He shall not indulge in activities directed towards eking out his livelihood;

On the other hand, he shall zealously promote activities, which will augment his love for God;

He shall be free from attachment to the material comforts of food, clothes etc;

He shall eat just the quantity of food which is necessary to keep the body and soul together, after offering it to the Lord, the eating itself being regarded as the coucluding part of the ceremonial worship;

When sufferings are visited on him, he shall accept them, in the following spirit:

I These are inescapable and therefore it is, that the Lord is keeping him in this body, which is the medium of expression of sufferings. It is good that the liability is being liquidated, one by one, bringing him nearer to God, every time;

II He shall also view sufferings from another angle, as follows. It is the Lord's benevolent Grace that heaps on him such sufferings so that he may develop a distaste for this foul body, the breeding ground for all evil propensities;

He shall not commit the mistake of regarding his conduct, regulated as above, as a means for attaining the Lord;

He shall desire the acquisition of the knowledge and conduct of the pious;

He shall remain deeply attached to the pilgrim centres;

He shall remain rivetted to self-less love of God and solicit His well-being (Mangalasasana), instead of praying for his own well-being, which is actually the Lord's sole concern;

He shall disdain sensual pleasures and set his face sternly against them;

He shall be eager to give up this body and attain the lotus feet of the Lord;

He shall not, even unwittingly, serve the worldlings and humble himself before them; as a matter of fact, he shall render service, in keeping with his essential nature, only to the Lord and His devotees and he shall always remain humble, in their Company;

He shall make it his creed not to take any food other than that offered to the Lord and His devotees;

He shall not remain apart, even for a split second, from the fruitful company of those, who help to enrich his knowledge and improve his conduct, and

He shall keep himself severely aloof from the worldlings whose contact would be detrimental to his essential nature.

As scrupulous adherence to the above code of conduct would be possible only with the Grace and blessings of the Preceptor, it behoves the Prapanna in question to invoke and secure the blessings of his spiritual preceptor.

O O O

CANTO 3

(Third Prakarana)

Aph : 244-258 : By way of elaboration of the Code of Conduct enjoined in the concluding part of the preceding Canto, the seemingly controversial concept of 'Mangalasasana', that is, the Subject wishing for the happiness of the Lord, is taken up first. Perfection belongs to Him alone and He is not merely above wants of any kind but he is also the repository of every kind of felicity. It would, therefore, be in the fitness of things if the Subjects prayed to Him for making good all their deficiency and bestowing the felicity they lack. How then could the 'Protector—Ward' relationship be reversed, giving rise to the concept of Mangalasasana'? No doubt. the Gnani cognises the Lord as the protector of the entire universe and invokes His Grace, as the sole Saviour, for deliverance from all ills and evils (Thiruvoimozhi V-8-8). There is, however, yet another stage where 'Prema' or deep love for the Lord holds sway. The highest love to God is love rendered for God's sake-love culminating in benediction or glorification of God. Love, so disinterestedly rendered, is love of purity and virginity. Under its influence, what is uppermost in the mind of the devotee is the Lord's remarkable tenderness (sowkumarya) and bewitching beauty, and he grows apprehensive of the Lord's safety and seeks His well-being. Instances where the omni-scient and omni-potent Lord's role, as the sole protector of the universe, was overlooked and His tenderness alone was kept in view, resulting in attention being turned on His safety, could be seen in Sri Ramayana, Sri Vishnu Purana and Sri Maha Bharata, the persons, who exhibited such an attitude, being king Dasaratha, Sita, Viswamitra, the Rishis of Dandakaranya, Hanuman, Sugreeva, Nandagopa, Vidhura, Pillai Urangavillidhasar etc.

The Lord's effulgent form (Dhivya Mangala vigraha), enchanting beyond words, is bound to induce this attitude in every beholder. When Sri Rama spent the night in Sringiberipuram, as the guest of Guha, the hunter-chieftain, Lakshmana was, as usual, standing guard around the bed-stead on which Sri Rama and Sita were sleeping, with his bow and

arrow, ready to go into action, when needed. Guha, the host, who was watching this, even went to the extent of suspecting the intentions of Lakshmana in arms, and grew apprehensive of the dreadful possibility of his killing Sri Rama, while asleep. Guha, therefore, armed himself and kept vigil over Lakshmana. And now, seeing their Chieftain, armed and moving about at that part of the day, Guha's Subjects feared that he might harm the Royal visitor of bewitching beauty, during sleep and they also took up arms, ready to attack their chieftain in case he did any harm to Sri Rama. Neither Guha nor his Subjects had seen Sri Rama, at any time before, not even in their dreams, and yet, all of them were reduced to such a strange pass, by the enthralling physical charm of Sri Rama. But the zeal of these persons pales into insignificance when we see the depth of love of the Azhvars and their resultant deep concern for the Lord's well-being. And, even among the Azhvars, Periazhvar excels. The speciality about Periazhvar is that 'Mangalasasana' was his perpetual concern, while the other Azhvars entered the spirit of Periazhvar, in this respect, only at times, and not always. Whereas the Lord's enthralling form thawed down the other Azhwars into ecstasy, unable to contain themselves and stand on their feet, Periazhvar was the only one, who could steady himself and be ever alert to the impending danger to the Lord's Person, with a view to averting it. The Lord's captivating form sometimes makes inroads into the essential nature of the other Azhvars and militates against their service to the Lord and His devotees (Bhagavat Seshatva and Bhagavata Seshatva). Instances, when the Lord was chided by those Azhvars for His delayed appearance, can be had in Nammazhvar's Thiruvoimozhi VI-2 and Thirumangai Azhvar's Peria Thirumozhi X-8. At times, those Azhwars were inclined to be harsh to the Bhagavatas as well c. f. Thiruvoimozhi VIII-2-7 and I-4-1. On the other hand, Periazhvar's stance for 'mangalasasana' not merely kept him above these hazards but actually enriched his 'Ubhaya seshatva' (i. e.) service unto the Lord and His devotees. As a matter of fact, his benediction was extended to Sri Mahalakshmi, flourishing on the Lord's winsome chest and Conch (chank-shell) and Discus, adorning the Lord's hands on either side.

The several facets of Periazhvar's 'Mangalasasana' are:—

(1) Whereas the Lord's unique prowess, His sinewy shoulders and the weapons (Conch and Discus) borne on His hands, all the time, ought to inspire enough confidence in the Azhvar and banish his fears about the Lord's safety, he would still entertain fears about something which might endanger these also;

(2) He would enlist even those hankering after lesser gains like Riches, on his side, to bless God;

(3) He would feel as though the Lord's encounter with the formidable Hiranya and Ravana, in the dim past, were but contemporary events and start worrying himself about the Lord's grim struggle ahead, with the demons, and pray for the Lord's victory;

(4) He would declare his intention to persevere in his unique technique of 'Mangalasasana' even in Heaven, treating it as his final goal, the end-product; as a matter of fact, he would caution, right from here, even those Eternal Heroes (Nitya soories), the Lord's constant Attendants in that haloed land, who never bat their eyelids and are thus known as 'animishas', ensuring unremitting vigilance over the Lord, to tighten up their vigil still further and never relax. (Periazhwar Thirumozhi V-2.9)

Periazhvar, among the Azhwars, and Emberumanar (Sri Ramanuja), among the Acharyas, have the unique distinction of feeling that the Lord is lonely and needs lots of people to surround and serve Him and consequently, their precepts to the Samsaris are 'service-oriented', that is, directed towards the administration of the necessary correctives to the worldlings, wallowing in the sty of worldly life, and enlisting them all in the service of the Lord. The other Azhvars and Acharyas looked at the Samsaris and themselves, as lonely beings- the Samsaris were considered lonely because they were found straying far away from the Lord to whom they belong; they also felt lonely themselves because of the paucity of their number vis-a-vis the vast multitude of the Samsaris whom they had to wean. The other Azhvars sustained themselves by drinking deep of the Lord's exquisite form and they throve on service rendered to the Lord. To Periazhvar, however, 'Mangalasasana' was the sole sustainer and all else. Actually, all of us are bound to follow in his footsteps and have our attention solely rivetted to the Lord in His Arccha Form, in the consecrated places like Srirangam, Thirumalai, Sri Kanchi etc. Abstaining from food, drink, sleep etc., our sole concern should be the safety of the Lord, making His appearance in this land of nescience, darkness and despair, with its great potentiality for inflicting evil. So then, 'Mangalasasana' fully accords with our essential nature and is indispensable to us all.

Aph. 259-262 : Having elucidated, in the preceding fifteen aphorisms, the theme of 'Mangalasasana', its validity, rather its indispensability to every 'prapanna', the Great Preceptor now proceeds to expatiate on some of the other components of the 'Prapanna's conduct, set out in aphorism 243. Among other things, it has been stipulated therein that the 'prapanna' shall court the company of those who help to enrich his knowledge and improve his conduct (anukoola sahavasa) and keep himself studiously away from the worldlings. And now, a picturesque description

is given of those in the former category, whose company is indispensable to the prapanna. They are the Srivaishnavas, surcharged with extra-ordinary fervour for attaining the Lord and are rich alike in spiritual learning, devotion to God and the Godly and detachment from worldly pleasures and the worldlings; it looks as if they are the sole repositories of each one of these attainments and there is a special halo, readily discernable on their person. Contact with these haloed persons is like unto a dry land, though not fed by water directly, getting wet by means of percolation from an adjacent field, full of water, Even as the oozing of water through the river sands is a clear portent of the approaching floods, the aforesaid qualities are automatically generated in the Individual, who is well within the proximity of the final goal. From this phenomenon, he can very well gather that this is the last span of life for him, on this side of heaven, and that, with the giving up of the present body, the dreadfnl cycle of birth and death will grind to a halt.

Aph : **263-268** : The 'Prathikoolas', whose company is to be scrupulously eschewed by the 'prapanna', are:—

(1) Those, who mistake the body for the soul;

(2) Those, who know that the soul is different from the body and yet think that they are their own masters, not having to serve any one else;

(3) Those, who are inclined to service but serve other than the Supreme Lord and His devotees;

(4) Those wedded to service unto the Lord but resorting to 'Means' other than the Lord for attaining Him (Upayantara nishtas) and

(5) Those who render service unto the Lord, as a matter of self-delight instead of for His sole delectation.

With such varying ideals and outlook, the Subjects in each category have their own objectives, patrons from whom they seek the fulfilment of those objectives and the relative means employed for propitiating them. For those in the first category, the patrons are those who tend their bodies well, money, the 'Means' and the sensual pleasures, the 'End'; for those in the second category, the patrons are the minor deities like Agni, Indra etc. who can confer the luxuries of Swarg etc., which constitute their end in view, the rites and rituals performed with this object, the 'Means'.

For those, in the third category, the patrons are Brahma, Rudra etc., worship of those Devatas, the 'Means' and stay in the upper worlds inhabited by these Devatas, the 'End'.

For the 'Upayantara nishtas' in the fourth category, the Supreme Lord is no doubt the Patron and attaining Him the 'End', for which they adopt 'Means' like Karma Yoga, Gnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. And for those, in the fifth category, the Lord, in His Arccha Form, is the Patron, courting Him and seeking His Grace, the 'Means' and service rendered to the 'Arccha moorthi', *for their own delight*, the 'End'.

Of these, the Subjects in the first three categories alienate themselves from the Supreme Lord and their salvation lies only in the exhaustion of the fruits of their good and bad actions, after going through the entire gamut. For the Upayantara, in the fourth category, salvation lies in the Grace of the Lord, who treats the Upayantara in question as a sort of 'Prayaschitta Karma' (an act of atonement), which gets discarded in the general sweep of all Karmas, totally displaced by the Lord's amnesty (Sarva Karma parityaga). And those in the fifth category, with their ill-conceived notion of 'Prapatti', are forgiven by the Lord, simply for the sake of Mahalakshmi, the mediatrix, who was instrumental in bringing the Subjects unto the Lord's door-step and in whose presence they courted the Lord.

The Lord, who is the 'Siddhopaya', the 'Ready Means', 'Means' and 'End' rolled into one, does not brook any other Means and this is what is called 'nirapekshopayatva'. And yet, why does He want the instrumentality of Mahalakshmi? Well, there is no inconsistency at all. It is only at the time of surrender, the 'Purusha' (Subject), who courts the Lord and the 'Purushakara', Sri Mahalakshmi, who is instrumental in ushering the Subject into the Lord's immediate presence, are needed by the Lord; thereafter, in the post-fruition (Upeya) state, that is, after the admission of the Subject to the Lord's fold, *He needs the help of neither of them, for all that He does to the Subject,* by way of ridding him of all ills and evils and heaping on Him, bliss and beatitude. Hence, the Lord's 'Nirapekshopayatva' is, by-no-means, compromised.

Aph. 269-273 : In the fifth category of 'Prathikoolas' whose company has to be eschewed, vide aphorism 263, those who render service unto the Lord, as a matter of self-delight instead of for the Lord's sole delecta tion, have been included. It is. however, noticed from the hymns of some Azhwars that they too have betrayed their personal sense of delight, c.f. Thirumangai Azhvar's Periathirumozhi VI-9-2, Periazhvar Thirumozhi II-7-9 etc. Some of them have even gone to the extent of impeaching the Lord publicly for His cruel unresponsiveness and mustering public opinion so as to accelerate the pace of their union with the Lord. And yet, the Azhvars can not be brought within the aforesaid category. It

was the exuberance of those love-intoxicated, super-eminent personalitles, that made them overshoot the mark, the natural corollary to such a state of mind. Their actions and utterances are not to be judged by the norms applicable to the commonalty and commented upon adversely. Surely, they are not comparable with similar transgressions committed by the common people, due to immaturity and ignorance, in a relatively unevolved state, still under the grip of nescience (avidya). The Lord's rapturous beauty literally threw the Azhwars off their feet and to talk to them, in that state, in the ordinary parlance of the common man, would be as futile as the dialogue between the deaf and the dumb. As Sri Alavandar puts it, those who have tasted the honey flowing from the Lord's lotus feet will never turn their attention elsewhere but be hankering after it.

Aph. 274 : The 'Prapanna' pursuing the code of conduct, delineated in aphorism 243, with the sweet blessings of an eminent Preceptor, is further enjoined:

(1) *to reside only* with the Preceptor and in temples;

(2) *to mouth only* the Greatness and glory of tne Preceptor besides recounting his own draw-backs and short-comings;

(3) *to go on uttering*, in a subdued tone, both as a matter of religious routine and a pleasant pastime, the Guru Parampara, that is, the apostolic line of succession of his Preceptors, as well as 'Dvaya', the gem of Mantras;

(4) *to memorise* the sacred works of the great Poorvacharyas and put into practice the code of conduct dictated therein;

(5) to boycott the company of non-Srivaishnavas and the favours extended by them, and

(6) to make it his bounden duty to render service to the Preceptor and to God.

Aph. 275-280 : As the Lord, in His 'Arccha' Form, does not speak out, the only other source of knowledge as to what constitutes service unto the Lord and the manner in which it should be rendered, could be the Shastras, the 'Srutis', 'Smritis' etc Similar knowledge in respect of service to be rendered to the Acharya could be had both from the Shastras and the Acharya himself. Service consists in doing whatever is palatable to the Master and refraining from what is not palatable. Service appropriate to the Prapanna's caste, station in life (Brahmachari, Grihasta or Sanyasi) and spiritual attainments, will be palatable and service inappropriate to these standards will be unpalatable and has to be avoided. Ofcourse, the Prapanna need hardly be told thet he should desist from rendering service

falling in the latter category. He, who shrinks from the performance of even acts, listed out in the Shastras as being capable of earning merit (Punhya), on the ground that it smacks of 'Upayantara' and thus jeopardises Moksha, will surely not go anywhere near the acts, condemned by the Shastras as sinful, leading one to hell. As 'Punhya' is said to be an impediment like 'Papa', for the attainment of God, the former being a gold fetter and the latter an iron fetter, both are to be eschewed. c.f. 'tadha vidwan punhya papey vidhooya niranjanah paramam samyam upythi". (Mundakopanishad)—the Brahmadharsi, having discarded both punhya and papa, is totally free from material association and reaches the highest goal It is noteworthy that the Prapanna looks down upon 'Punhya' also, like 'Papa', whereas the Lord, in His boundless love for him, is prepared to view even his 'Papa' as 'Punhya' and accept him with all his drawbacks. The Lord's fondness and readiness to view the Prapanna's 'Papa' as 'Punhya' will, however, only remain a theoretical wish, not capable of realisation, seeing that the prapanna, with his meticulous conduct and standard of behaviour, shall not be prone to commit sins, at all.

Aph. 281-287 : Service, if not animated by devotion (Bhakti), should at least be prompted by fear (Bheethi) of effacement of one's essential attribute of servanthood 'Seshtava', due to abstenance from service. If, unfortunately, service does not materialise from either of these two impulses, the Individual loses everything; his basic attribute of servanthood gets obliterated, thereby shutting out the means of evoking the Lord's Grace and the final bliss (Upeya) of beholding the Lord's delight in appreciation of service rendered unto Him. Performance of service unto the Lord and His devotees is thus indispensable to the Individual but the latter should render it disinterestedly, as an end in itself, without employing it as a means for securing some tangible benefits here or intangible felicity elsewhere. Instead of stretching his hand out to the Lord to receive something, in return for such service, it should be a case of His greedily grabbing at his selfless service, although, by Himself, He is above wants of any kind.

"Yah kriyah samprayuktasyuh ekanthagatha
buddhibhih
thassarvas sirasa dhevah prathigruhnhathi
vy swayam

(Mahabharata)

Sri Andal's Natchiar Thirumozhi IX-7 is highly instructive, in this regard. Instead of making service a matter of *quid pro quo* (a thing given in exchange for another), Sri Andal submitted to the Lord, enshrined in

'Thirumal irum Solai' near Madurai, that, if only He would accept her offerings, she would go on multiplying them manifold besides serving Him. Service rendered to Sri Krishna by Vidhura, Malakara and Kooni (Kubja, tha hunch-backed maid servant of Kamsa) could be cited as typical examples of self-less service, being discussed in this section.

Vidhura fed Sri Krishna with delicious food, sanctified by self-less devotion, in dire contrast to those who seek personal gains while feeding others. The flowers offered to the Divine Brothers, Balarama aad Krishna by Malakara, the petty flower-vendor of Mathura whose humble hut in a by-lane was visited by Them, had the added fragrance of 'ananya prayojanatva', an offering which is an end in itself, totally free from the acrid smell of selfish desires And then, we pass on to Trivakra, the hump-backed young woman with handsome features, whom Sri Krishna beheld, as he was winding his way through the main road of Mathura along with Balarama. She was carrying a vesssel containing sweet-smelling sandal paste and Sri Krishna accosted her and demanded of her some of that excellent preparation. Entranced by the bewitching beauty of the Divine Brothers, she gave Them, with all her heart, the thick aromatic sandal paste, specially prepared by her for King Kamsa. Greatly pleased with the service, Sri Krishna transformed her at once into a straight-backed, beautiful damsel, erect and elegant It is said that a little bit of lime is enough to spoil the best sandal-wood paste in the world. The kubja did well to offer the Divine Brothers, pure and high-class unguent, meant for the royalty, untainted by limy selfishness.

Aph 288-294: Even as the rapanna zealously eusures that his essential attributes are kept, in tact, while rendering service (Kainkarya), he should exhibit thc same care in the four preceding stages as well. These stages are : (1) When knowledge dawned on him through the Preceptor's initiation and instruction (2) submission to the Lord's spontaneous grace as the sole means for salvation, (3) Attainment of the Lord's lotus feet and (4) Partaking of the bliss of being in the Lord's proximity. 'Kankarya' (service) is the next stage, as 'Moksha' is nothing but the privilege of service to God (nitya kainkarya praaptireva mokshah). In the first stage, the Subject should not rest contented until he has received full and complete instructions from the Preceptor regarding 'Tatva' (truth), 'Hita' (way or means) and 'Purusharta' (goal), laying unreservedly before him, from time to time, the area of ignorance yet to be cleared up;

At the second stage, namely submission to the Lord's spontaneous grace, the Subject's 'akinchanya' (his utter destitution, that is, the absence of any merit in him) should be placed in the fore-front;

In the next stage, the Subject shall not rest on his oars, having surrendered himself to the Lord's Grace, but shall be all agog to attain Him;

During the fourth stage, when the Lord pours into rhe Subject, marvellous communications of His Divine Nature, the Subject shall keep on revealing to the Lord, his insatiable thirst, that is, his keenness to be replenished with more of that ecstatic experience.

And now, the Subject's nescience in the first stage is cleared up by the knowledge imparted by the Preceptor; the bankruptcy of merit (imperfection) in the second stage is made up by the Lord's perfection-the happy position in which He is, not needing anything from the Subject except his desire to come under the Lord's protection;

The eager expectancy in the third stage ceases when the Lord's grace decends on him, while the longing for blissful contacts with the Lord, ever more, in the fourth stage, is satisfied by the continual experience of that bliss.

The nescience (ignorance), in the first stage, was the penalty paid by the Subject for his age-long transgressions comprising commission of prohibited acts and omission of acts enjoined by the Shastras;

the bankruptcy of merit, owned bv the Subject, in the second stage, is actually an index of the profundity of his knowledge that attainment of God is purely a matter of His voluntary grace, totally unrelated to the merit in him;

the burning desire to attain the Lord, exhibited in the third stage, springs from the non-attainment of God, that is, the delay in attaining Him;

the insatiate longing, in the fourth stage, is inspired by the Lord's rapturous beauty.

Of these, the last two, namely, the Subject's burning desire to attain the Lord, unable to brook separation from Him any longer, and the insatiate longing for incessant communion with the Lord have been dealt with, *in extenso*, in another work of Sri Lokacharya, entitled 'Arcchiradhi gathi'.

Aph. 295-299 : The four successive stages, passed through by the Subject and the root- cause of each, were discussed in aphorisms 288-294. Four attributes (two pairs of opposites), common to both the Lord and the Subjects, are now being discussed. These are: Knowledge, Ignorance, Energy and Impotence. In so far as the Lord is concerned, it is ;

Knowledge of the good qualities of the Prapanna;
Ignorance of his draw-backs;

Energy harnessed to his protection; and

Impotence lying in His disability to frown at his draw-backs and give him up.

And, in the case of the prapanna, it is:

Knowledge of the auspicious traits of the Preceptor;

Ignorance of the bodily infirmities of the Preceptor;

Energy to serve the Preceptor to his (Preceptor's) entire satisfaction; and

Impotence lying in his disability to perform the acts prohibited by the Shastras.

Aph. 300-307 : The prohibited acts fall under four categories, namely, (1) *performance of evil deeds* 'akritya karanam', such as cruelty to animals, applauding the unrighteous, committing adultery, thieving, telling lies, consuming obnoxious food etc;

(2) *affront to God* (Bhagavadapachara), such as regarding Lord Mahavishnu, on a par with minor deities, casual treatment, amounting to profanation, accorded to Sri Rama and Sri Krishna as though they were mere humans, instead of venerating them with the awe and reverence due to the Lord's incarnate forms; adoption of modes of worship ill-suited to one's caste and station (asrama), thinking in terms of the material of which the Idol is made, detracting from the sanctity of the Lord's iconic manifestation; looking upon oneself as the Master, amounting to theft of the Lord's property, He being the owner of us all; misappropriation of goods, meant for the Lord's worship, for one's own benefit, and abetting those who commit such an offence, thereby incurring the Lord's displeasure etc.;

(3) 'Bhaagavadapachara', that is, throwing offence at Srivaishnavas, under the influence of conceit, greed and lust; and

(4) offences classified as intolerable (asahya), such as malice borne towards God and the Godly without any provocation whatsoever, insolent behaviour towards the 'Preceptor' and jealousy towards fellow-disciples etc.

These transgressions excel each other in their intensity (cruelty) and they, therefore, alienate the Grace of the Lord and keep Him at an enormous distance from their perpetrators, seriously jeopardising their salvation.

Aph. 308-314 : And now, the 'Preceptor-Disciple' relationship is discussed, bringing out succinctly, the ideals to be kept in view by each.

When a disciple, duly eligible to receive spiritual instructions according to the standards set out earlier, seeks the good offices of the Preceptor, the latter would be committing an offence, far more heinous than those listed above, if he suffered from a distorted vision of (1) his own role (2) the disciple in question, and (3) the purpose of imparting instructions to the disciple. While imparting instructions, the preceptor should be humble enough to feel that he is but the mouth-piece of his own Acharya (Preceptor) and that the disciple in front is but a co-disciple, both of them being the disciples of the same Acharya. The instructions, currently imparted, should be aimed at equipping the pupil suitably and enabling him to join the ranks of those engaged in selfless devotion to the Lord, wishing Him all joy (mangalasasanaparas). This is the correct perspective, the Preceptor ought to have and it gets badly distorted when the Preceptor is bumpteous enough to look upon himself as such, and the pupil before him, as his own disciple. It becomes even worse when the Preceptor makes use of the disciple for the former's personal, wordly gains, feels that he is helping the disciple to shake off his bondage (Samsara) and attain salvation and is thereby rendering service unto the Lord by assisting Him in the great task of reclaiming the Individual souls and that, by enlightening the disciple, the Preceptor can acquire a good companion for himself. As a matter of fact, all these objectives can be achieved in an unexceptionable manner, as follows:—

The disciple, whose bounden duty it is to serve the Preceptor, will automatically attend to his personal needs and the Preceptor does not have to think about it at all, rather, it would be wrong on his part to do so. The disciple's salvation will materialise through the Lord's gracious thoughts on him, the 'hitopadesa' (sound instructions) imparted by the Preceptor will be duly applauded by his 'Acharya', as service rendered to the Lord Himself. The enlightened company of the disciple will be available to the Preceptor, as a matter of course, as the former shall, out of sheer gratitude, pine for the company of the latter, for all the chastening and channelising done by him.

When the Preceptor imparts instructions to the disciple with the sole object of enabling him to become a self-less devotee of the Lord, the disciple is bound to blossom, as such. Like-wise, the Preceptor, who has the correct perspective, as outlined above, is blessed by the Lord with 'Acharyatva' (preceptorhood). On the other hand, if he does not adopt the correct posture, he will not be worthy of the position as Preceptor, and, due to his unworthiness, the instructions imparted by him will be of no avail and consequently the disciple will not be able to play his due role.

realise that his body, soul and material possessions vest in the Acharya, *in toto*. In this way, the Acharya will be rid of the egotistic feeling that he is responsible for the salvation of the disciple and the disciple can completely eschew the feeling that it is because of his doles that the Acharya is eking out his livelihood. Putting it analytically, once the disciple is deemed to have entrusted his all to the Acharya, the latter need not feel ill-at-ease, that he is being maintained by the disciple. Actually, it will then be a case of the disciple being maintained by the Acharya himself. The Acharya shall not accept from the disciple anything that the latter considers, as his own. Such a gift, tainted by ego, is neither worth making by the disciple nor worth acceptance by the Acharya If, however, such a gift was made by the disciple and accepted by the Acharya, it would be totally inconsistent with their respective roles. Once the disciple and his all have been made over to the Acharya, there is no question of the former being left with anything of his own, to be palmed off as a fresh gift to the Acharya. There is not the slightest complexion of 'Give and take' relationship between the two, which would be highly detrimental to their mutual relationship and destroy it altogether.

Aph. 343-358 ; The only thing, the disciple can give to the Acharya, is the pleasure, that is, the gratification that he derives from watching the disciple's progress and attainments, the depth of his learning, strength of conviction in the final goal and the eagerness to achieve it. Intent upon the pleasure of the Acharya, the disciple shall desist from indulging in theft of the Lord's property, denying the Lord, His food, and giving affront to the Preceptor, Mantras and the Lord. It would be tantamount to theft of the Lord's property if the disciple, who belongs to the Lord, thinks that he is his own Master or serves some one other than the Lord; it would be just like standing between the Lord and His food, if the disciple indulged in self protection or sought the protection of some one other than the Lord, Failure to conform to the teachings of the Preceptor, and/or passing on those teachings to unworthy persons, will constitute an affront to the Preceptor, while forgetting the meaning of the Mantras, imparted by the Preceptor, or distortion of it would be an offence against the Mantras. It would be a sacrilege if the disciple diverted his attention from the Lord either by word, deed or thought and was devoid of love for Him. The disciple shall remain grateful to the Acharya, throughout life, for having reconditioned his foul mind and set it on the rtght course It is a foul mind that gloats over its own qualities and perceives draw-backs even in God and the Godly and that too, where there is none. Even as an afflicted eye sees things doubled and a jaundiced eye sees everything yellow, it is a foul mind that thinks ill of others and discerns evil in them. All that

evil is in the mind that conceives it and not in the persons to whom it is attributed. Once the mind is redeemed and purged of its erstwhile grossness, it sees only good in others. The regenerated mind, revelling in the glory of God and His devotees and ever conscious of its own drawbacks, has hardly the time for anything else, and much less, for contemplation of the short-comings of the devotees.

Aph : 359-365:—Far from looking down upon the fellow-beings, in the light of their defects, the Prapanna shall view these defects as his own, even as one associates oneself with the defects of one's nearest kith and kin, making common cause with them. Kinship with the fellow-beings is inherent in the fact that all are but the children of the Supreme Lord and are indissolubly bound to Him. There is, however, no possibility of these defects coming to the notice of the Prapanna who stands pledged not to think, even for a moment, about those who do not meditate on the Lord reclining on the Sea-shore at a place called 'Kadanmallai', in the Bay of Bengal. At this stage, it might be asked why Saint Nammazhvar highlighted, in Thiruvoimzohi III-9-1, VI-1-1 and IX-1-1, the despicable ways of the worldlings. As this was only by way of weaning them away, it can not be regarded as a hostile or destructive criticism. As a matter of fact, the Prapanna is not to disclose to the Lord and His devotees, the wrongs done to him by the worldlings, even as Sita, the Divine Mother, made no mention of the insults and injuries heaped on her by the Rakshasis, during her captivity in Lanka, either to Hanuman, who visited her on the spot, or later on, to Sri Rama. And then, take the case of the Supreme Lord, who spares no pains to incarnate among His subjects and wean them away from the ephemeral worldly pleasures. During His Avatars, a good many have not merely not shown the desired response but have been positively repulsive, hostile and indifferent to Him. It is because of such persons that this world of human affairs is still very much *in-tact*; otherwise, there would have been an end of this 'Vibhuti', the land of nescience, darkness and despair. At the end of His Avatar, the Lord goes back to the Celestium with but a partial fulfilment of His mission and yet, in a sense, happy that this land, with its worldly contents, has not been wiped off, thanks to the recalcitrant elements met with during the Avatar. On the yonder side of Heaven, He would, howvever, not mention to any one, not even His Consorts about the unwholesome behaviour of the Subjects, down below.

As against the normal worldly trend of retaliation for the wrongs done by one to another, the Prapanna shall exhiibit unto those, who do him wrong, (1) *tolerance*, to such an extent that, even at heart, he bears no malice or thought of retaliation; (2) *compassion* for the

wrong-doers, who can not escape punishment at the hands of an unrelenting Lord, full of love for His devotees; (3) *a hearty laugh* at the stupidity of those people who fail to realise that he is outside the pale of their mischief-the worst they can do to him, is only material harm and he is not in the least worried about it, (4) *exultation* at that his body, which is the target of attack by those people, is already looked upon by him, as his enemy (vide aphorism 243) and that they are but his allies in attacking a common foe. and (5) *Gratitude* to those people for reminding him of his draw-backs, which it was his own duty to keep under constant review.

Aph : 366-380 :—*The Lord's Spontaneous Grace*:

It was said a little earlier, vide aphorism 328, that the Prapanna passes his time between revelling in the Glory of God and His devotees and contemplation of his own short-comings. Contemplation of his short-comi-ngs incites fear of the dreadful possibility of prolongation of the cycle of births and re-births but the antidote for this lies in recounting the Lord's auspicious qualities of Love, Mercy etc, which at once dispels such fears. It would, however, be the height of folly if the trend was rever-sed, that is, if he dreaded the possibility of the Lord perpetuating his bondage, judging him by the same old standard of his Karma, as before. By way of getting over this fear, if he thought in terms of his own spiritual equipment and advancement, as sure hopes for his salvation, it would indeed be a case of virtue defeating itself, a self-defeating virtue, clouded by conceit. No doubt, Nammazhwar complains in Thiruvoimozhi VII-2-1 "My Lord-Liege ! even when I am all agog to attain Your lotus feet, why do you still keep me in bondage, exposed to the vagaries of the five unruly senses ? " In Peria Thirumozhi XI-9-1, Thirumangai Azhvar feels terribly panicky about the forbidding prospect of the Lord still condemning him to life inside the mother's womb and, on this account, feels insecure like the tree standing on the fringe of a river, which could be uprooted, any moment, by floods. This fear and the resultant reproach by these Azh-vars, however, stem from their intimate bonds with the Lord, whom they regard as their sole Sustainer. This is just like the child playing in the streets, sustaining an injury at play, rushing home, crying and beating the mother for her apparent slackness in preventing the injury. Apart from their eternal and inviolable bond of relationship, the Lord is Omni-potent and could easily wipe off the malaise. And now, considering the relation-ship between the creatures and the Creator, as between children and Mot-her respectively, it would appear as if God stands responsible for everything that may befall the creatures. For instance, if a child should

fall into a well, they would impute the act to the mother herself for her failure to keep a watchful eye on the child and prevent the occurence. Had she not permitted the child to walk up to the edge of the well and remain there, the child would not have fallen into the well. If non-removal of the child from the proximity of the well could be construed as permission granted for its stay there, it might as well be argued that it is the same permissive attitude of the Lord that is responsible for the Individual straying away from the Lord and getting bogged down in the difficult terrain of Samsara. Well, this is not the case. It has already been thrashed out that the consent of the Individual to submit himself to the Lord's protection is not the cause of the benevolent protection eventually extended by the Lord and it is the Lord's own redemptive Grace that matters. Even so, permission granted by the Lord for the Individual's stay in Samsara is not responsible for the latter's downward trend. Actually, it is the Lord's command that the Subjects should conform to the dictates of the Shastras and work their way up to Him. It is, therefore, but natural that He expects the Subjects to show due regard to the Shastraic decrees and injunctions and develop love for Him. In the final analysis, however, it turns out that the Subjects get stranded over here, enjoying the fruits of their own 'Karma' and it is only the Lord's spontaneous Grace that pulls them out of the morasse. To put it the other way round, namely, it is the despot of a Lord that keeps the individual souls earth-bound and it is their spiritual attainment that compels their advancement, would be seeing things in the wrong perspective and would result in their losing Him altogether. Here is a person who has fallen into the whirling depths of the well of Samsara by dint of his 'Karma' and the Lord, standing above on the brink of the well, looks into the well and, out of sheer compassion, stretches out a helping hand to pull the other one up. But then, the one, down below, starts reproaching and accusing the helper of having pushed him into the well. The Lord shrinks back, unable to stand this unjust accusation. It is, therefore, incorrect, nay, grievously wrong to hold that non-attainment of the Lord by the Subjects is due to the Lord's independence (Swatantrya) or despotism.

In Peria Thirumozhi XI-8-1, Thirumangai Azhvar expressed the fear of the Lord shutting him up over again, in bondage, but almost at once realised that the Lord would frown upon him for such wrong accusation, vide XI-8-2. But then, how did he repeat the earlier fear over again ? That was because, the Azhwar knew that the Lord's anger could be easily overcome by His Grace and he just could'nt help crying out his woe to a merciful Lord. The poignancy of separation from the Lord and the pangs of misery, incidental to mundane existence, forced the Azhvar to speak

out his heart. braving the Lord's anger. Apart from the fact that the Lord is his sole refuge, He is like unto the mother whom the child clings to, despite her pushing it aside, out of sheer annoyance c.f. Kulasekara Azhvar's Perumal Thirumozhi V-1. Jayanta, the crow, who deserved to be slain, was let off with a slight injury. That is how the Lord's Grace operates, a fact of which the Azhvar was well aware, and hence all those liberties he took to bring home to the Lord the enormity of his suffering, with a prayer for speedy deliverance.

O O O

CANTO 4

(Fourth Prakarana)

Aph. 381-398 : *The Lord's spontaneous Grace (contd.)*

The necessity for constantly recounting the Lord's auspicious attributes was emphasised in aphorism 366, by way of dispelling the fear of prolongation of one's tenure of bondage over here. And now, the manner in which the Lord gears up the machinery and accelerates the spiritual advancement of the Individual Souls is being described here. Although perfect bliss and beatitude reign supreme in the High Heavens, where the Lord is surrounded by the Celestials, the 'Muktas' (Released Souls) and 'Nityas' (Eternal Heroes) in a glorious setting, yet, He can hardly feel complacent, pitifully drawn, that He is, towards the vast multitude of His Subjects in the regions down below, straying away from Him. The Lord is in the same unfortunate plight as the head of a family, surrounded by his affluent sons, catering fully to his needs, still feeling uneasy, with his thoughts centred round a son lingering in a distant land, far away from the rest of the family. Eager to get restored to these straying Subjects, the compassionate Lord dowered on them the body with its functional apparatus, namely, the sense-organs, capable of capacitating them for a career of gainful activities in accordance with the Shastras. Apprehending, however, the untoward possibility of outright rejection by the conceited Individuals, in case He condescended to present Himself in their midst and claimed them as His own, the Lord keeps continual vigil over the Subjects by entering their souls, as their 'inner self' and standing right inside the region of their heart, like unto the fond Mother lying down and fondly hugging the babe, fast asleep, from behind its back. Unlike the earthly relations, who give up the dead and reconcile themselves to the loss after the customary wailing, the Lord is such a robust optimist that, in the midst of the numerous transgressions committed by the Subjects, He seldom loses heart but would be on the look out for a suitable opportunity to get them round and pick out, here and there, even evil acts, which could possibly be stretched into the domain of

merit, according to His extra-liberal standards. and give them credit therefor-what is known as 'agnata Sukrita' (hidden or unknown merit), leading to vicarious redemption. For example, when a pilgrim party, passing through a dacoit-infested area, was about to be attacked by some bandits, a posse of armed police passed along and the bandits took to their heels. The mishap that was about to befall the pilgrims was thus averted and the members of the Police Force, who were not even aware of the danger the pilgrims were in, are rewarded by the Lord for having rescued His devotees.

To take another example, the owner of a big Estate irrigates his lands through a channel from a distant water-head, due to scarcity of water, in the vicinity. Some devotees, travelling in that region with parched lips and tired limbs, refresh themselves in the channel and quench their thirst and offer their heart-felt thanks to the Estate-owner, who had, however, dug the channel, purely for the irrigation of his lands and not as a piece of charity. The thanks of the devotees are, however, automatically registered by the All-Merciful Lord to the credit of the Estate-owner, a vicarious reward of which he was least aware. Yet another example shall be that of a wealthy person, who was addicted to gambling. He had built a house to serve exclusively as a gambling den, where he and his associates would gamble every day, till late in the night. Thereafter he would lock it and go home. Certain Sadhus passing along, find the house locked, and rest in the verandah for the night. The Lord would give credit to the wealthy man for having provided shelter to the Godly men, although he never intended that kind of benefit for the way-farers. To this list of vicarious rewards by the compassionate Lord could be added (1) the Eve-teasers visiting temples just to gaze on members of the fair-sex worshipping there and (2) the revengeful man running round a temple in hot pursuit of a cow, which had earlier strayed into his fields.

Literally thrusting upon the Individuals, merit of this kind, without their ever being conscious of it, the Lord allows it to gather mass, down the years, like unto a sizeable quantity of gold picked up, at intervals, by the Goldsmith, with the aid of wax, from out of the minute particles of gold sticking to the touchstone, every time an ornament is tested on it. The Lord would not merely invent such opportunities for graciously rewarding the Subjects but also magnify the reward a hundred-fold, everytime, drawing them nearer and nearer to Him. This aspect is further reinforced by the life-story of rewardees like queen Lalita, set out in 'Vishnu dharma'. Daughter of the King of Vidharba and the consort of the King of Varanasi, Queen Lalita was easily the most

charming and, therefore, the most beloved of all the three hundred wives of the King. Far from being proud of her special stature, the queen was very pious, staying, almost all the time, in the temples attached to the Palace, tending the lamps etc. Queried by her harem-mates, as to how she alone came to be possessed of such unique advantage, she could tell them about her preceding birth, as, over and above all her other accomplishments, she could remember her past birth as well. Well, what precisely was her merit and what was she in the immediately preceding birth ? Maitreya, a royal priest, had built a temple, consecrated to Lord Vishnu, on the banks of a river. Lalita, in her previous birth, was a mere she-rat, lurkIng round the temple. One night, during the Tamil month 'Kartigai', she had got up one of the temple lamps, to remove the wick and run away with it. Just then, she heard the mewing of a cat and collapsed, right then, out of sheer fright. The fatal movement of her gasping head, however, kindled the wick of the dying lamp and it started glowing again, for a while. This was all the merit in her, for which she was blessed with the present life in such an extra-ordinary setting ! There are several other such episodes in 'Suvratopakyana'.

The ignorant masses, unaware of the Lord's special devices, such as these, either take their gifts and attainments for granted or acknowledge them casually without going deeper into the why and wherefore of it. On the other hand, the hearts of knowledgeable persons, like the Azhwars, would thaw down, in gratitude, and exclaim :—

"And now has He shot me into
shape and entered my very being"
(Thiruvoimzohi X-8-9)
"Oh, what is the merit in me ? How
doth the Lord shine in my heart
so well ?"
(Thiruvoimozhi X-6-8)
"You reconditioned my foul mind and
redeemed it"
(Thiruvoimozhi II-7-8)
etc., etc.,

But then, could the 'agnatha Sukrita' (hidden or unknown merit) or 'yadhrischika sukrita' (adventitious merit), as it is called, be the means for the attainment of the final goal (Purusharta) by the Subjects ? No, these are just devices invented by the Lord for bestowing His special Grace, after allowing the maximum latitude to the erring Subjects; otherwise, an unreserved and unqualified amnesty would result in wholesale

emancipation of one and all, which would cut across the very foundation of the Shastras. The position, in this regard, became crystal-clear during the course of an enlightened discussion in an assembly of learned men, gathered around Sri Ramanuja. They all remained in the temple of Lord Ranganatha at Srirangam, awaiting the Lord's ceremonial procession from inside the Sanctum. Just then, one of them exclaimed, "Having cooled our heels, hours on end, waiting on all and sundries, all these days, it is indeed our good fortune (Sukrita) that, today, we are waiting at the door of our Lord, where we rightly belong." This evoked a query from another, "What is it that sets the hearts of persons immured in Samsara, towards God, some day ?" Some attributed it to "Yadhrischika Sukrita" but it was questioned by Sri Kidambi Perumal whether they had to propitiate, just like God, another Deity, known as 'Sukrita Deva'. It was eventually clarified by Pillai Thirunarayoor Arayar that the word 'Sukrita' itself refers to the Lord only and, by this means, He just accelerates the pace of progress of the Subjects and nothing more need be read into it.

If the Lord bestows His Grace on the basis of the 'agnatha' or 'yadhrischika' Sukritas, does it not assume the complexion of co-operative grace instead of spontaneous grace ? No, the fountain source of these side-issues of 'agnatha' and 'yadhrischika' merits is the Lord Himself. But for the initial bestowal by Him, of the body and limbs, strength and energy for activisation of the individual souls, there would have been no scope for these 'Sukritas' to crop up and, even otherwise, the so-called 'Sukritas' themselves are the Lord's gifts. If it is argued that creation is conditioned by the 'Karma' of the Individuals, it is indeed a matter of grace galore on the part of the Lord that He created them all simultaneously, instead of at different times, as and when the creation became actually due in each case, depending upon the 'Karma'. Contemplating, in retrospect, the stage when the individual soul was lying defunct, just as inert as the non-sentient matter, devoid of the capacity to lament or enjoy and the Lord's boundless Grace in putting him back on his feet by endowing him with body, limbs and sense-organs, for eking out his progress, should easily make one desisit from fretting and worrying and indulging in self-protection.

In the ancient farm of 'Samsara', the Lord, as an indefatigable and time-honoured Cultivator, has been raising crops of 'Bhakti' and, apart from the regular operation of ploughing, sowing and harvesting, a few harvested grains, dropped in the fields in the course of removal, grow by themselves and yield fruit without any effort of the farmer. The aforesaid 'Sukritas' can be likened to such random growth of crops. Having tasted, for long, the fruits, good and bad, of their past deeds (in Swarg and Hell

respectively), there comes a stage, in every one's life, when a serious introspection begins, as to what he is, where he is, whither he is bound and the wherewithal for attaining the goal. When the Lord's redemptive Grace descends on him, vide Chapter XIV, Ahirputnya Samhita of Sri Pancharatra, he gives up his old propensities, namely, yearning for the fruits of his actions,develops a taste for 'Moksha', pays due attention to the Shastras, seeks initiation at the hands of the Preceptor and gets elevated to Heavens. Saint Nammazhvar pinpoints, in Thiruvoimozhi VIII-7-8, the Lord's spontaneous Grace, extolling the Lord as one who sheds His voluntary Grace, with great delight, on those whom He singles out for such favours and has thus chosen to get Himself firmly lodged in the Azhvar's mind. In the hymns of the Azhvars expatiating on the Lord's Grace, there might appear to be mutual contradictions, in some places, for the superficial reader, but a critical and cogent study thereof will remove such doubts.

Before one begins to entertain love for God (abhimukya), one should be free from hatred for Him (adhvesha). It is held by some that this 'adhvesha' springs from the aforesaid 'yadhrischika Sukrita' and that love for God (abhimukya) is engendered by His Grace. As 'adhvesha' is, however, the prime factor in the development of soul-force, it is hardly appropriate to attribute it to such a paltry thing as the 'Yadhrischika Sukrita'. As a matter of fact, a 'Sukrita' is that which the Shastras ordain and the Individual strives after, knowingly. The 'Yadhrischika' type could hardly be termed as 'Sukrita', by this standard, and yet, the Lord has condescendingly chosen to call that also as a 'Sukrita'; as it comes in handy for the advancement of the Subject. Seeing thus, that the Lord has been toiling incessantly for the spiritual advancement of the Subject, right from that forlorn state when he was turning his back against Him, the Subject has absolutely no reason to feel apprehensive of his being allowed to slip back to his old ways. As a matter of fact, he ought to have implicit confidence in the Lord, as the sole Architect of his advancement.

Aph : 399-406 : And now, look at the extent to which the Gnanis go, in their appreciation of the Lord's efforts in salving them. They feel that the Lord had made Himself omni-present, only to ensure that they don't get out of His reach, like unto a whole town beseiged by the authorities, when they want to trap even a single inhabitant, to prevent his escape in any direction. These enlightened souls look upon the very act of creation of the universe by the Lord and His subsequent Avatars, as designed solely for their advancement. The Lord's voluntary Grace, resulting in the redemption of the Individual, can not be resisted when it starts

inundating him and overflows its continents, a picture which is very similar to, but in sharp contrast with the inevitable participation in the fruits of one's 'Karma'. The one overtakes the Subject as much as the other. While the fear of getting further entangled in 'Samsara' results from the contemplation of one's own 'Karma', meditation on the Lord's redemptive Grace quells that fear. The fear and solace keep alternating in the minds of the Subject as long as he is tethered to this body and kept in the material surroundings. No doubt, he could always keep himself above fear by contemplating solely on the Lord's Grace and His countless auspicious attributes, but his environments are still such as to incite fear in him, now and then, and that will cease only when he is finally removed from the present scene, completely cut out from material contacts.

Aph : 407-409 : *'Charamopaya' or adoration of the Acharya as the sole means for the attainment of Moksha:*

It has all along been elucidated, in this treatise, that the Supreme Lord is the 'Siddhopaya' or the direct means for the attainment of 'Moksha' by the Subjects, brooking no external aid besides Himself. But the Lord has several facets in one of which He would keep the Subjects clinging to 'Samsara', in the light of their 'Karma', while, in another, He would exhibit His quality of Mercy and redeem the Subjects to the highest state. He could thus be instrumental in keeping the Subjects bound down in 'Samsara' as well as for their emancipation. That is why the fear of continued retention in bondage due to his Karma haunts the Prapanna, at times, and the depression is then got over by his meditating on the Lord's infinite mercy and tender solicitude for His devotees. This lurking uneasiness can, however, be got over if the Preceptor (Acharya) is regarded as the sole means for the attainment of Moksha, seeing that the Preceptor is none but Lord Sriman Narayana Himself, come down in mortal form, out of deep compassion for the Subjects, getting drowned in the ocean of Samsara, to lift them ashore with the help of the Shastras, which take the place of the pair of hands.

"Sakshan Narayana Devah Kritva
martyamayeem thanum
Magnanuddharate lokan Karunhayath
Sastra panina"

(Naradeeyam),

See also Stanza 38 of Arulalapperumal Emberumanar's 'gnanasaram', conveying the same idea.

In this new dispensation. the Subject can be absolutely free from panic or uneasiness of any kind. This secret of the Acharya holding the trump card in regard to our salvation, shared by our great 'Poorvacharyas', is now being divulged and discussed in the remaining portion of this work, for the benefit of the people at large. The authority for this can be had from the hymns of Madhurakavi Azhvar (Kannhi nunh siruttambu). Although the other ten Azhvars have also expatiated on the glory of the Acharya, as even excelling that of the Lord, yet, in actual practice, they did not abide in that 'Charama parva' or exclusive adoration of the Acharya, as Madhura Kavi did. He knew no God other than Parankusa (Nammazhvar). To him, Nammazhvar was every thing, sustenance and all. The other Azhvars passed through varying experiences, alternating between delirious enjoyment, when in the presence of the Lord (samslesha) and desolation and dejection, when not obliged by the Lord with His sweet presence (vislesha). Madhura Kavi had, however, none of these phases but enjoyed the unmitigated bliss of exclusive devotion at the feet of Nammazhvar and would even ridicule the other Azhvars for the strange vicissitudes and temperamental variations, caused by their direct approach to the Lord (Pratama parva). So then, it is the hymn of Madhura Kavi Azhvar of such unique stance, that throws the much-needed light on the current topic of 'Acharya nishta'.

Aph : 410-411 : The propriety of the 'Acharya' being regarded as the sole means is now examined. It is imperative that there should be no incompatibility between the 'means' adopted, on the one hand, and the essential nature of the Subject and the ultimate Goal, on the other. The essential nature of the Subject, namely, being the vassal of the Lord (Bhagavad seshatva) logically culminates in his being the vassal of His devotees (Bhagavata seshatva). Likewise, the end-product (goal) also stretches on to 'Bhagavata Kainkarya' (Service unto the devotees). Analysing the essential nature and the goal, in this manner, the means employed for the attainment of the said goal should rationally be the devotees themselves. Among the devotees, the Acharya stands in the forefront, having condescended to accept, unto his fold, the Subject and initiate him into the spiritual truths. The Subject's dependence (seshatva) on his Acharya should, therefore, be a matter of great jubilation for all the devotees. This will, in turn, reveal that service rendered at the lotus feet of the Acharya should be the ultimate goal of the Subject. In keeping with the essential nature and the goal thus defined, the means should also be none other than the Acharya himself. Even as Madhura Kavi Azhvar was wholly devoted to Nammazhvar, among the disciples of Sri Ramanuja, Vaduga Nambi bore unalloyed devotion for the Great Acharya.

This staunch disciple used to have a dig even at such stalvart disciples of Sri Ramanuja, as Koorathazhvan and Mudali Andan, who had the reputation of being the Great Master's staff and pennant, as being double-faced, because, now and then, they used to go to the temple of Lord Ranganatha, petition to the Lord directly and get absorbed in His exquisite charm.

Aph. 412-424 : It has been said in Chandogyopanishad (8-12-2) that the 'Jivatma', after shedding his age-long gloom and dirt of ignorance, evil propensities etc., shines in his native brilliance and attains to God. Service unto God, the goal of the "Jiva", however, gets enlarged and expanded into the service of His devotees, which, in turn, leads him on to the service of the Acharya, who effectively set the' Jiva' on the spiritual course, a matter of great delight to the devotees. Thus, the first stage of service, by the Subject, is that rendered by him unto the Lord, a matter of Supreme gratification to his Preceptor (Acharya); the second stage is service rendered to the devotees, much to the delight of the Lord and the third and the final stage is service rendered to the Acharya, to the great jubilation of the devotees. But it is extremely difficult to attain to this last stage of service unto the Acharya, by-passing service unto the Lord. It is not as easy as giving up the petty sensual pleasures, out of extreme disgust, and switching on to service unto the Lord. No such flaws can be discerned in the Lord who is full of auspicious qualities, compelling the Subject to give up service unto Him. Even during those periods when the Lord withholds His presence from the devotee and torments him, the latter is in no mood to give Him up but pines for Him, all the more (Thiruvoimozhi V-3-5). This is quite true, although it is at variance with the experience of the mundane world, where good and bad things produce opposite effects, that is, the former attracts while the latter repels. Finding the love-smitten Parankusa Nayaki (Nammazhvar, mentally transformed into a feminine God-lover), let down badly by an unresponsive Lord, the mother of the lady-love complained about a heartless Lord, who had put her daughter in such a parlous predicament (Thiruvoimozhi II-4-5). But no sooner had the mother opened her mouth with such a reproach on her tongue, than the daughter gagged it effectively, despite her pangs of separation from the Lord, saying that the Lord is the fountain-source of Grace and a highly coveted benefactor. (Thiruvoimozhi II-4-6). In Sundara Kanda 26-13, even while bemoaning her captivity, Sita extolled the great qualities of Sri Rama and lamented that one of such excellence had not come to her rescue, only because she lacked the requisite felicity, being totally devoid of grace. This clearly shows that there can be absolutely no flaw or draw-back in the Lord, warranting His being given

up, on any account, even in trying moments of separation from Him. As a matter of fact, what is sought to be classified as a drawback in the Lord, if at all, is just the mental agony inflicted by Him on the devotees, when He doesn't favour them with His nectarean presence.

When, in the sweet presence of the Lord, the devotee will automatically discard the inferior pleasures of sex and sensuality (c. f.) Pey Azhvar's Thiruvandadi, stanza 14 and Bhutattazhvar's Thiruvandadi, stanza 42. But then, he will also give up service unto the Godly men, being completely lost in the unfathomable depths of the Lord's bewitching beauty and His charming disposition. In Thiruvoimozhi III-7, Nammazhvar tried to pin himself down to the service of the Lord's devotees, but, in passing, referred to the Lord's exquisite charm and auspicious attributes. The latter held such an irresistible sway on the Azhvarthat he slipped back to the adoration of the Lord, in the very next Thiruvoimozhi (III-8).

Even during those moments of 'Vislesha' (separation from the Lord), when the devotee languishes without food, sleep etc., and gives up several other routine activities, he will get immersed in the devout contemplation of the Lord and pine for restoration to His presence. He will thus not only repel the inferior pleasures but cease to relish even the Lord's devotees c. f. Thiruvoimozhi VIII-5-1 and VIII-1-1. Actually, for him, whose cherished goal is service unto the Lord's devotees, the Lord's compelling charm is a great impediment because it just steals away his sight and mind (dhrishti chittapahari) and thus detracts from his service to the devotees. Satrugna, who was an ardent devotee of Bharata, was known as a 'nitya satrugnah', the conqueror of the perpetual enemy, namely, Sri Rama's enticing charms. It was this conquest that enabled Satrugna to serve Bharata whole-heartedly and unremittingly. Satrugna seldom turned in the direction of Sri Rama, lest the latter's bewitching charm should entice the former away from service to Bharata. This is being mentioned here to show what an uphill task it is, to be a 'charama parva nishta', serving exclusively the Acharya.

Aph :425-436 : Having thus determined that the ultimate goal is service to the Acharya, the means to be employed, commensurate with the attainment of this goal, should be the Acharya himself. If, however, the Lord is taken as the means, it would be incompatible with the goal in view. In stanza 45 of his laudatory hymns on Sri Ramanuja, Thiruvarangathu Amudanar has referred to the identity of the 'Means' and the 'End', namely, the lovely pair of feet of Sri Ramanuja. And now, courting the Lord, as the 'means', is like seeking somebody's favour by getting hold of the hand, with the off-chance of that person unlocking the hand and

dashing ahead. On the other hand, looking upon the Acharya, as the 'Means', is like seeking the favour of a person by getting hold of his feet, with the certain prospect of response (anatikramaneeyam hi charana grahanam). And now onwards, the greatness and glory of the Acharya are elaborated,

The Acharya is the common benefactor benefitting alike the Master (the Lord) and the Servant (Subject). The Subject, who was all along eluding and evading the grip of the Lord, despite His Herculean efforts to redeem the former, is restored to him by the Acharya, duly chastened and properly equipped for the final state of blissful rapport between the two. Little wonder then, that the Lord coveted the role of the Acharya and took it up Himself. 'Dvaya', the Mantra Ratna or the Gem of Mantras, was imparted by the Lord to Sri Maha Lakshmi, in Vishnuloka, and therefore it is, that He heads the hierarchy of Acharyas, in their apostolical line of succession (Guru parampara) 'Lakshmi Natha Samarambam'. And then, Lord Krishna imparted 'Gitopadesa' to Arjuna, culminating in the 'Charama Sloka', the secret of secrets, spelling out the path of loving surrender to God. In the earlier Avatara, as Sri Rama, He disseminated, on the sea-shore, His creed of 'Abhaya pradana', vindicating His position in regard to the grant of asylum to Vibhishana, the refugee.

It would be possible to recompense the Acharya, in an adequate measure, only if there were four vibhooties and two Gods, the idea being that any reward, short of both the worlds (the Nitya Vibhooti or the Eternal Land and the Leela Vibhooti or the sportive Universe) and God Himself, will be inadequate, and in order to make a suitable reward, two sets of each would be necessary, an obvious impossibility ! Unlike our bonds with the Lord, which operate both ways, depending upon His *modus operandi*, (v i z.) throwing us back again into thc whirlpools and eddies of Samsara, in the light of our Karma (good and bad deeds) or granting us 'Moksha', in the exercise of His voluntary redemptive Grace, our link with the Acharya sets us on the one-way traffic, leading exclusively to the final goal. The Acharya is, however, the Lord's gift to us. It is indeed a wonderful cyclic operation–the gift of an Acharya to us by the Lord and Acharya's gift, in turn, of the Lord to us. The greater of the two gifts, namely, the Acharya, has, however, come to us from the Lord and, from this point of view, the Lord becomes the superior benefactor.

Aph : 437-440 : If contact with the Acharya is duly fostered and kept, in tact, it will automatically generate in us, spiritual knowledge, devotion to God and the Godly, and detachment from worldy pleasures. The presence of all these qualities will, however, be of no avail to a per-

son, who, due to his perversity, has lost the link with the Acharya. It is something like the married woman sticking to her marital chord (mangalya sootra) so that she can bedeck herself with other jewels, in course of time. If, on the other hand, a woman gives up the marital chord, the insignia of her marriage, as something superfluous, simply because she has quite a lot of other jewels, all these jewels would not merely cease to have any decorative value but would prove positively harmful, reducing her to the abject condition of widowhood. To take yet another example, equally instructive, the Solar heat, which helps to blossom the lotus flower in the pond at sun-rise, mercilessly dries up to mere shreds, the lotus-flower removed from its watery habitat and thrown outside. Likewise, the Lord, who helps the Subject to blossom into spiritual maturity, will have no hesitation in drying up the spring, once the Subject severs his link with the Acharya. 'Narayanopi vikrutim yati guroh prachyutasya dhurbhuddheh kamalam jaladhabhedam soshayati Ravir na dhoshayati'. Although the link between the Lord and the Subject is eternal and inviolable yet it was dormant and as good as non-esixtent, till the Acharya kindled in the Subject, the requisite spiritual awakening. When this fruitful link with the Acharya gets cut out, it also cuts across the bond with the Lord, which came to light only through the Acharya.

Aph : 441–447 : Having elucidated the imperative necessity of keeping, in tact, the link with the Acharya, which alone can keep alive the Subject's contact with the Lord, the necessity for the intervening stage of contact with the Bhagavatas (Lord's devotees) 'Satvikais sambashanam' like unto the farmer in the heart of a village, is examined. The Bhagavatas serve as the prop, the light-pole around which the young creeper twists itself and grows upwards. When the Subject is conscious enough to seek initiation by the Acharya, the devotees play quite a prominent part in giving him proper guidance and training and putting him on to the Acharya. Vadakku Thiruveedhi Plllai, the illustrious father of Sri Pillai Lokacharya and an ardent disciple of the famous Nambillai, used to cite very often the Great Master's utterance that there is absolutely no salvation for the Subject, lost, for long, in selfness and selfishness which destroy love to God, except the Acharya's condescending love. This is the key-note or the central idea of the entire treatise and the five aphorisms elucidating this theme (443-447) shine forth like the key-stone, the cynosure of this precious jewel. The Great Master, Nambillai is quoted, in this context, to impart the requisite traditional sanctity to this meaning,

While the Shastras have prescribed various other 'Means' like 'Bhakti', 'Prapatti' etc., why should it now be maintained that 'Salvation'

lies only in the condescending love of the Acharya ? Well, 'Bhakti' involving incessant personal effort and fierce concentration on the part of the Individual is likely to stir up his ego and it is the fear of this untoward possibility that makes him give up 'Bhakti', as the 'Means' for the attainment of God. Even 'Prapatti', betokening the Subject's inplicit love for god, which is quite in consonance with his essential nature, is given up by him as the 'Means', fearing the off-chance of an Independent Lord putting him back in 'Samsara', in the light of his unsettled ethical account. For the matter of that, even his courting the Acharya is not unmixed with personal egoism and is, therefore, likely to unsettle the Subject's essential nature. To look upon the Acharya, as the 'Means', in such a mental state of the Subject would again be futile and harmful, like unto one wearing a ring made out of Gold, consecrated to Yama, the deity, who brings on death. So then, the only solvent, that really matters, is the condescension and Grace of the Acharya, the loving acknowledgement by the Acharya of the Subject, as belonging to the Pastor's benevolent fold

Aph : 448-454 : Who will give up the Acharya, well in hand, and run after God, an unknown and uncertain quantum ? Will one any give up the asset on hand and go about digging deep in to the earth, in search of a dubious treasure ? Will a man, dying of thirst, have recourse to rain water to be dropped down by the clouds, or water from the distant sea, river or well, ignoring the water in the vessel, right in front of him ? The Lord operates from different regions, appropriate to His five manifestations. He who permanently abides in the service and worship of the Acharya, as the all-in-all, shall, however, see in the Acharya a blending of all these five regions, namely, the High Heaven, resonant with the 'Sama Gana' sung by the 'Ever-free' and 'Emancipated' souls over there, the milky ocean where the Lord brings Himself within the ear-shot of the ardent devotees, crying out their woes and calling for help, the places where the Lord jumps into, in His incarnate forms as Rama and Krishna, the Iconic manifestation, all around, literally beseiging the Individuals, gone astray, and the heart-region of one and all where the Lord graciously stays on, sumptuously feeding those who meditate on Him. One of such an order and calibre, who sees in the Acharya, the aggregate of the various aspects of God-head, deems the egocentric Individuals, who defy the supremecy of God, as well as those who worship other than the Supreme Lord, as hostile; he is friendly towards the like-minded persons, who are totally dependent on their respective Acharyas; he is just indifferent to those, who are subservient to the Supreme Lord. To all except one of this stance, the spiritual knowledge and the disciplined code of conduct will be necessary adjuncts in the pursuit of the 'Means', adopted for the attainment of

the final goal. But to him, whose goal is the delectation of the Acharya, the said spiritual knowledge and code of conduct will be directed towards the achievement of that goal and he thus dwells, all along, right in the domain of 'Upeya' (final goal).

To the Subject in this category, acts which do not have shastraic sanction behind, such as coveting another's wife etc., are strictly forbidden as they destroy him and others as well. While self-destruction due to the commission of prohibited acts is understandable, how does it destroy others ? Well, it is like this: the Subject in question, who is dear alike to the Lord, His devotees and the Acharya, will be offending them all, by indulging in such acts, and this would prove ruinous to him. That one, who has advanced to such a state as 'Charama parva', should have stooped so low, might well result in others either despising him or following suit, erroneously placating themselves that, after all, even such an evolved one was committing such acts and there was nothing seriously wrong if they did like-wise. Either way, these people will work out their destruction. It is not for them to take the law into their hands and despise an 'Upasaka', in such an advanced state. It is up to the Lord to deal with him suitably. Their attitude will only enrage the Lord and alienate His sympathy for them c. f.

'apichet sudhuracharah bhajathe mam
ananyabhak
Sadhureva samantavyah samyagvyavasito
hi sah'

(Bhagavad Gita IX-30)

which means: "Even he, who has committed grave breaches of the codes of conduct, appropriate to the different stations in life, deserves to be placed on a par with a Saint and honoured likewise, if he medidates on me with selfless devotion, with no other end in view."

The Subject in question is on a par with an errant Prince, who shall be dealt with by the King suitably. The King would not, however, like his Subjects to despise or look down upon the Prince and would punish them, if they did so.

Aph. 455-457 : Even the so-called permissible enjoyment, such as sexual relationship with one's wife, which does not offend against public standards of morality and hence can not lead to the gates of hell, is taboo to the Subject in question, in view of the restraints placed on the 'Upasaka', as well as the 'Prapanna', in regard to such pursuits. c. f. Brahadaranyaka Upanishad, 6-4. Such pursuits also cut across his essen-

tial nature but what is even more relevant is the pleasure of the Acharya, when he notices in the disciple, complete detachment from sexual and sensual enjoyment. Conversely, absence of such detachment on the part of the Subject and his failure to extricate himself from the clutches of sensuality are bound to displease the Acharya, whose pleasure is, however, a matter of paramount consideration for the Subject, and hence, the imperative need for his abstinence from sensual enjoyment of any kind including the permissible or non-prohibited type.

It might be argued that there could be nothing wrong if sexual relationship with one's wife is resorted to, in the discharge of the sacramental obligations of a Grihasta (married man), as distinguished from the satisfaction of one's carnal impulses. But then, it cuts him both ways, as, in either case, it makes inroads into his essential nature (swaroopa) of 'ananya bhogyatva' (being the sole object of the Lord's enjoyment) and 'ananya upayatva' (looking to the Lord as the sole means). Again, it is not enough if the sexual enjoyment is given up merely out of fear of its eclipsing his essential nature but it should be out of an intense ardour towards the final goal, giving rise to extreme disgust for worldly pleasures and the complete abandonment of all material possessions, 'Kshetranhi mitranhi......' and sensual enjoyment, as serious impediments to the attainment of the final goal.

Aph. 458-463 : In the Subjects pursuing the path of 'Bhakti', 'Prapatti' or 'Acharya nishta', either 'swagata sveekara' (i. e.) courting the Acharya as the 'Means' or 'paragata sveekara' (i, e.) soliciting the favour of his condescending love as the sole succour, there should be an irresistible urge to get to the destined land yonder, and a corresponding dislike for this despicable abode. Besides, it should be a case of sheer inability for them to stay in this body, any longer, away from the cherished goal, betokening their inordinate longing for early consummation of the 'End'. As elucidated a little earlier, courting the Acharya as the 'Means' (swagata sveekara) is tainted by egoism and is likely to disturb the Subject's essential nature. Nevertheless, the goal is achieved. c. f. Stanza 89 of Thirumazhisai Azhvar's 'Nanmugan Thiruvandadi', wherein he says: "I have Come to know a sure 'Means' for opening up the gates of Heaven and entering it, namely, worshipping the feet of those who devoutly meditate on the lotus feet of the Lord, reposing in the Milky Ocean." In 'Bharadwaja Samhita', it has been stated that he on whom the Acharya sheds his voluntary Grace (Paragata sveekara) as well as the one, who courts the Acharya's Grace (Swagata sveekra), attains Heaven.

"Gurunha yobhimanyathe Gurumva
Yobhimanyathe, thavubhau Paramam
siddhim nyamadhupagacchathah."

The authority for the 'Paragata sveekara', (i. e.) the Acharya shedding his voluntary Grace on the disciple, can be found in Sri Andal's 'Natchiar Thirumozhi' X-10 (Nallaven Thozhi...), Thirumazhisai Azhvar's 'Nanmugan Thiruvandadi,' Stanza 18, (Maraya Thanavanai .), the last sloka of Sri Alavandar's 'Stotra Ratna', (Pithamaham Nathamunim vilokya praseeda matvrittam achintayitva) and the Pauranika Sloka, "Pasurmanushyah Paksheeva Yeeha Vaishnava samsrayah thenaiva the prayasyanthi tat vishnoh paramam padam."

Sri Andal is sanguine of seeing God through her foster-father, Periazhvar, to whom He is easily accessible. Thirumazhisai Azhvar affirms the commanding stature of the 'Charama parva nishtas' (i. e.) those who worship the devotees of Lord Mahavishnu, Who, as Narasinga, tore into two halves the opposing Hiranya, with His sharp nails. In the concluding sloka of 'Stotra Ratna', Sri Alavandar beseeches the Lord to shed unto Him, His Grace, for the sake of his Grand Father, Sriman Nathamuni, the Great Savant, turning a blind eye to his own shortcomings. The pauranika sloka, quoted last, declares, in no uncertain terms, that, whoever comes within the purview of a Vaishnava's Grace, a four-footed animal, human being or bird, reaches the Supreme habitat known as Heaven.

For learning any art, initiation by the Acharya is essential. The condescending love of the Acharya is thus an adjunct (anga), the launching pad for embarking on all the other 'Means' (upayas). How then has it been stated, in the aforesaid pauranika sloka, that the love of a Vaishnava, by itself, sends his wards to Heaven (thenaiva the prayasyanthi), savouring of an independent 'Means' (swatantropaya) ? It is like 'Prapatti' (surrender to the Lord's Grace) which normally operates as an adjunct to the other 'Means' such as 'Karma Yoga', 'Gnana Yoga', 'Bhakti Yoga', becoming self-sufficient and self-supporting, when it is resorted to, as the 'Means', operating both ways, namely, eradication of the unwholesome trends and bestowal of all felicity, Likewise, Acharya's grace can operate by itself, eradicating all ills and evils and bestowing the highest state. c. f.

Balamooka jadandhascha
pangavo badhiras thatha
Sadhacharyena Sandhrushtah

prapnuvanti param gathim."

(Baradwaja Samhita I-35)

"Even unevolved children, the dumb, the dullard and the blind can attain Heaven through the grace of the eminent Acharya."

It may be recapitulated now, that 'Prapatti' is resorted to by those who find the discipline of 'Bhakti' pretty hard besides running counter to their essential nature (swaroopa). Even 'Prapatti', preconditioned by the Subject's immense and implicit faith in the Lord's Grace, is fraught with the risk of the Lord operating in one of two ways, namely, throwing the Subject back into the bondage of Samsara in the light of his Karma, in His unbridled Independence (Swatantrya) or granting 'Moksha', in the exercise of His redemptive Grace. This risk is eliminated by the Subject switching on to 'Charamopaya' of the Acharya's protective benevolence, the one-way traffic leading to 'Moksha'. The loving condescension and Grace of the Acharya helps the Subject's advancement in three distinct stages, beginning with the infusion of fresh vitality into his essential nature, like unto the tender leaf sprouting on a stalk, withered due to long years of aloofness from God and the Godly. The spiritually revitalised and regenerated Subject then blossoms into the service of the Lord's devotees and ultimately starts yielding fruit, as a 'Charma parva nishta', wedded to the condescending love of the Acharya, which alone matters, in the final analysis, redeeming, correcting and perfecting the protege. This is indeed the ultimate blending of the 'Means' and the 'End', dealt with in the first and second part, respectively, of 'Dvaya', the Mantra Ratna.

Blessed be the holy feet of
Sri Pillai Lokacharya !
Blessed be the holy feet of
Srimad Vara Vara Muni !

S. Satyamurthi

O O O

ERRATA

Page	Line	For	Read
		SRIVACHANA BHUSHANAM	
vi	last line	bequeathad	bequeathed
2	25	tu	to
2	33	aiso	also
2	34	termented	tormented
4	7	lwe	two
12	22	ugon	upon
15	3 from bottom	and and	and
16	10	coures	course
16	28	vyapheshtavyo	vyapadheshtavys
17	17	Kenne	Kennel
17	24	braught	fraught
18	8	dosing	dozing
18	18-19	frofusion	profusion
20	18	Azlvar	Azhvar
21	10	insert, comma between 'Lord' and 'the'	
26	10 from bottom	delete the comma between 'not' and 'hesitate'	
29	17	insert fullstop after 'are'	
31	4 from bottom	givnig	giving
34	3	Lords	Lord's
45	12	ot	or
62	3 from bottom	ponderin	pondering
62	3 from bottom	manceured	manoeuvred
62	last line	Sudject	object
80	18	one any	any one